

ANIMATE NATURE IN THE WORKS OF
SAINT FRANÇOIS DE SALES

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ABBREVIATIONS

For convenience of reference we have used the following abbreviations for the various works of Saint François de Sales:

- V. D. - Introduction à la vie dévote.
- Tr. - Traité de l'amour de Dieu.
- J. P. - Premier sermon pour le jour de la Pentecoste.
- J. A. - Sermon pour le jour de l'Assomption de Nostre-Dame.
- S. P. - Sermon pour le jour de Saint Pierre.
- O. F. - Oraison Funèbre du Duc de Mercœur.

INTRODUCTION

We have limited this study of Nature in the works of St. Francis de Sales to those works which have a conscious literary aim, namely, L'Introduction à la vie dévote, Le Traité de l'amour de Dieu, and the four sermons of which we have authentic copies from his pen. These are the works, which, because they are still widely read, have literary importance today. The Controverses and L'Etendard de la Sainte Croix are controversial works written for the conversion of the Chablais, and they have historical rather than literary interest. The Correspondance, the Entretiens, his Règlement de vie and Testament have importance for the hagiographer and the apprentice of the devout life but not for the student of literature. The remaining Sermons, because they were not written wholly by St. Francis but were reconstructed from his notes and those made by members of his audience, have been omitted from this study.

The purpose of this study is to discover precisely how and to what extent the author made use of Nature in his writing. It was suggested, on the one hand, by the remarks of the his-

torians of literature, who almost unanimously accuse him of bad taste in the too free use of lessons and examples drawn from Nature; and on the other hand, by the following statement of Charles Forot,¹ a recent editor of L'Introduction à la vie dévote:

Il resterait à analyser plus profondément les images empruntées aux choses simples et naturelles dont le livre est plein. Elles replacent la dévotion et les efforts de l'âme pieuse dans l'ordre banal des nécessités profondes du monde. Elles arrachent l'esprit inquiet à la seule contemplation de soi-même et -- de façon inattendue spirituelle, et, sans doute, de la part du saint, beaucoup plus consciente qu'on n'imagine -- évoquent les règles divines et universelles.

If, as a result of this study, it can be proved that the verdict of the literary historians on the author's use of Nature is unjust, that it is due to a too slight acquaintance with his works, some small service will have been rendered to the literary reputation of the writer of whom Victor Berard² says:

Saint François de Sales est l'auteur qui a rendu le plus de services à notre langue; il est la porte d'entrée au XVII^e siècle. L'Introduction à la vie dévote, disons plutôt l'introduction à la langue française ...

1. V. D., notes de Charles Forot, p. 320.

2. Loc. cit.

CHAPTER I

ST. FRANCIS AND THE CRITICS

In the case between St. Francis and the critics, let us see first what the author had to say about his style and his aims, for as it is an axiom that a writer can be judged only in the light of what he is trying to do, having seen what the author has to say on the subject, what the critics have to say, and what the author actually did in his works, we can judge whether or not criticism has been directed along the lines suggested by what the author was trying to do.

In the Preface¹ to the Introduction à la vie dévote after having explained that the book is based upon letters written for the spiritual direction of Louise de Chastel, St. Francis makes the following straightforward statement regarding style:

C'est pourquoi tu ne verras rien ici d'exact: ains seulement un amas d'avertissements de bonne foi, que j'explique par des paroles claires et intelligibles, au moins ai-je désiré de le faire. Quant au reste des ornements du langage, je n'y ai pas seulement voulu penser, comme ayant assez d'autres choses à faire.

This amounts to an apology for having neglected to pay attention to style and a quitclaim to all pretensions to the

1. Page 5.

"ornements du langage." When he comes, however, to the Preface of the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, St. Francis is frankly preoccupied with the problem of style. He foresees some of the objections which might be urged against his work and takes pains to answer them. In an evident desire to come to an understanding with the reader in the beginning, he says:²

On traite maintefois les escrivains trop rudement; on précipite les sentences que l'on rend contre eux, et bien souvent avec plus d'impertinence qu'ilz n'ont pratiqué d'imprudence en se hâtant de publier leurs escritz. La précipitation des jugemens met grandement en danger la conscience des juges et l'innocence des accusés. Plusieurs escrivent sottement, et plusieurs censurent lourdement. La douceur des lecteurs rend douce et utile la lecture; et pour t'avoir plus favorable, mon cher lecteur, je te veux icy rendre rayson de quelques pointz qui autrement, à l'aventure, te mettroient en mauvaise humeur.

Passages such as the one cited above make us understand why St. Francis was famous for the gentleness with which he administered reproof. Here is the same spirit of moderation, the same gentle insistence upon the facts of the case which we have seen applied to the realm of Devout Life, and which recall the celebrated passage:³

En quoi font une grande faute plusieurs qui, s'étant mis en colère, se courroucent de s'être courroucés, entrent en chagrin de s'être chagrinés, et ont dépit de s'être dépités; car par ce moyen ils tiennent leur coeur confit et détrempe en la colère: ...

After establishing a basis of understanding with the reader, St. Francis remarks that the four first books of the Traité and some chapters of the others might well be omitted by those

2. Preface to the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, I, 6.

3. V. D. p. 142.

who are looking only for the practice of Divine Love, adding:⁴
 "Mays tout cela néanmoins leur sera bien utile, si elles le regardent dévotement." On the other hand there are those who will object that they do not find in the book the whole development of everything that pertains to Divine Love. To them St. Francis offers this defense:⁵

Certes j'ay eu en consideration la condition des espritz de ce siècle, et je le devois: il importe beaucoup de regarder en quel age on escrit.

If he wishes to be read, an author not only must pay attention to the age in which he writes, but he must also consider the habits of men in general. Our author states frankly that he has made the chapters short so that they may more readily attract readers, for "those who know that the end of a chapter is not far removed from its beginning willingly undertake to read it; which they would not do, however agreeable the subject might be, if much time were necessary to finish the reading."⁶

St. Francis is aware that some will find the style of the Traité de l'amour de Dieu a little different from that of the Introduction à la vie dévote and very different from that of the Etendard de la sainte croix. He begs them to remember that in nineteen years one learns and unlearns many things, that the language of peace is not the language of war, that

4. Tr., I, 306.

5. Loc. cit.

6. Ibid., I, 308.

one speaks in one way to young apprentices (of the devout life) and in another way to comrades of long standing.⁷

It is in the sermon Pour le jour de Saint Pierre that he takes up directly the question of the validity of comparisons, citing the Bible as his authority for their use:

... et que personne ne vienne dire que toutes comparaisons sont odieuses, et qu'il n'y a point de rapport entre le maistre et le serviteur, puisque Nostre Seigneur ne fait point de difficulté de se mettre en comparaison avec les bergers, les moutons, avec les vignes, avec les pierres.⁸

Because the popularity of the Introduction à la vie dévote caused something like a revolution in the thinking and practice of Christians living in the world concerning the devout life, making the property of every believer what had previously been considered the business of the cloister, many have thought to see in the work of St. Francis some novelty of doctrine. He himself professes to teach nothing new. "Je ne dis rien que je n'aye appris des autres."⁹ Though he is not able to remember from whom he received each thing in particular, he would make it a matter of conscience not to render credit to the authors upon whose work he has drawn for any considerable part of his own.

One more passage from the Traité de l'amour de Dieu¹⁰ will help us understand the spirit of this work on theology and will, perhaps, throw some light upon the relation in the author's

7. Tr., I, 316.

8. S. P., II, 207.

9. Tr., I, 308.

10. Ibid., II, 199.

mind between its matter and its form:

L'amour est l'abrégé de toute la théologie, qui rendit très-saintement docte l'ignorance des Paulz, des Anthoines, des Hilarions, des Simeons, des François, sans livres, sans précepteurs, sans art.

Turning next to the historians of literature, we shall consider what they have to say concerning style in general and the use of Nature in particular in the works of St. Francis.

Lanson¹¹ sees St. Francis, "under the flowery amenity of his language," arming the will and preparing the revival of moral energy which will lead to the Cartesian theory of the will, the Cornelian theory of heroism, and Jansenism. Hence it is just a few steps from the teaching of St. Francis to Jansenism, and Lanson sees in a "flowery" style the vehicle of a stern doctrine.

For Petit de Julleville¹² the religion of St. Francis inclined toward tenderness, and he remarks that Pierre Camus, equally influenced by the Astrée of d'Urfé and the Introduction à la vie dévote, undertook to create the Christian novel. Petit de Julleville uses the two phrases "poetic images" and "accent of truth" in discussing the influence of St. Francis' style upon Sainte Chantal.

Wright¹³ refers to the Introduction à la vie dévote as

11. Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française (Paris: Hachette, 1920), p. 344.

12. Louis Petit de Julleville, Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française (Paris: Colin, 1896), IV, 421-422; V, 608.

13. C. H. C. Wright, History of French Literature (New York: Oxford University Press - American branch, 1925), p. 285.

"the sugary book of religious love and mysticism contemporaneous with the composition of d'Urfé's Astrée."

According to Nitze and Dargan,¹⁴ "Saint Francis de Sales had socialized the sermon and given it charm. But his imitators exaggerated these qualities; their effects were sugary and soft, and preaching lost its dignity."

Brunetière¹⁵ is shocked by St. Francis' use of anecdotes borrowed from antiquity. He cites the comparison with which the Preface to the Introduction à la vie dévote opens -- that of "la Bouquetière Glycera" who knew so well how to diversify the arrangement of her flowers, and who is compared to the writer of works of devotion, making a new assortment of old teachings -- as the height of bad taste. He summarizes his disapproval with the prudish statement: "Non seulement cela nous choque aujourd'hui, mais quel que soit le respect que l'on doit à la mémoire de François de Sales, canonisé par l'Eglise, cela est peu convenable."

In the use of comparisons Sainte-Beuve¹⁶ compares our author to Benjamin Franklin. "Tous deux, d'ailleurs, ont le don heureux des comparaisons: Franklin l'a plutôt à la manière d'Esopé; il excelle dans l'apologue. Saint François de Sales a la parabole, et, sans y viser, il imiterait plutôt l'Evan-

14. Wm. A. Nitze and E. Preston Dargan, History of French Literature (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), p. 332.

15. Ferdinand Brunetière, Histoire de la littérature française classique (Paris: Delagrave, 1904-1917), II, 82.

16. Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Causeries du lundi, (Paris: Garnier, 1852-62), VII, 221.

gile, si ce n'est qu'il symbolise trop." For him it is not a question of the kind of comparisons which are permitted in a work of devotion, but of their too great number.

Sayous in his Histoire de la littérature française à l'étranger has more fully treated the subject of comparisons from Nature in the works of St. Francis than have the other historians of French literature. He believes that our author writes out of his own experiences of a creation which he has closely observed, comparing him in this respect to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Nevertheless, he divides the comparisons into two groups: the better ones, which St. Francis has gathered from his own countryside; the poorer ones, which are suggested by the popular notions of his time on natural history, the compilations of Pliny, and the current fabulous ideas concerning the oriental countries. The latter, Sayous asserts, even defeated their purpose by obscuring the thought:

Comme l'imagination de François choisit de préférence les particularités merveilleuses, il en résulte assez souvent que, pour nous autres modernes, l'analogie ayant disparu avec le fable, la pensée devient ce qu'elle peut.¹⁷

Sayous believes that St. Francis modeled his style on that of d'Urfé in respect to the subtleties of language, that the former fell into bad taste "when he wished to adorn his language and succeeded only in spoiling it."¹⁸ Like Brunetière, Sayous

17. Pierre André Sayous, Histoire de la littérature française à l'étranger (Paris: J. Cherbuliez, 1853), I, 49.

18. Ibid., I, 76.

objects to the figure concerning "la Bouquetière Glycera" on the ground that it is innocently out of place, and contrasts it with the aptness of the one in which Philothée, on coming out of prayer, is urged to gather a little bouquet of devotion "pour l'odoriser le long de la journée."¹⁹ Elsewhere, he says, St. Francis insists too much upon a comparison and spoils it by a conclusion of bad taste -- as when men and women are compared to fruits, each of which because of its peculiar weaknesses must be preserved in the sugar of devotion.²⁰ In general, Sayous condemns St. Francis' style for its excess of ingenious figures.

Brémond, in his Literary History of Religious Thought in France, sees the forerunner of St. Francis in the work of Richeome, the Jesuit who in his religious writings had dwelt upon Nature, using stories from animal and plant life as a means of arousing devotion. St. Francis, in Brémond's opinion, is far superior to his predecessor: "When he set pen to paper, (St. Francis) knew exactly what to do and the spirit which he desired to diffuse. Like Richeome and every writer worthy of the name, he lives, he caresses the details, but he never loses sight of his goal."²¹

While conceding the "sugary" element in our author's style, Brémond offers an explanation, which for our purposes,

19. V. D., p. 28.

20. Ibid., p. 233.

21. Henri Brémond, Literary History of Religious Thought in France (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), p. 26.

may be useful. "Here is no question of his style, frequently more vigorous than one would imagine, but sometimes too sugary. The style went with the mission; François de Sales aimed at calming souls; do not require of him to write in Pascal's manner, ravishing certainly, but also disquieting."²² As to the over-refinement alleged by Sainte-Beuve and Strowski, Brémond considers this judgment due to the lack of psychological penetration of these critics, "perhaps because neither of them ever heard Philothée's confession. This indefinite ebb and flow of disquietude, these returns upon returns, are human life itself."²³

Strowski, in his Introduction à l'histoire du sentiment religieux en France au 17^e siècle, compares St. Francis to Montaigne and la Fontaine in the way his imagination added grace and relief to the truth of the thought and the faithfulness of the expression, by drawing upon his experiences of Nature, particularly those of his native Alps with their thousand varied aspects.²⁴ He attributes to Castori and Sirmond (teachers of St. Francis) and to his study of the humanities, his tendency toward a "flowery style."²⁵ Nevertheless, he recalls the author's advice on preaching to Mgr. Fremiot: "'The supreme artifice is to have no artifice ... One talks in vain, but the

22. Henri Brémond, op. cit., p. 82.

23. Ibid., p. 89.

24. Fortunat Strowski, Introduction à l'histoire du sentiment religieux en France au 17^e siècle (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie, 1898), p. 64.

25. Ibid., p. 66.

heart speaks to the heart and the tongue speaks only to the ears.' "26

For Strowski, St. Francis' use of comparisons from Nature, far from obscuring the thought, are a definite aid for understanding it:

Les images, les allegories, les comparaisons ne semblent plus un luxe. Ce sont autant d'efforts que fait l'orateur pour que l'auditeur entre pleinement dans sa pensée.²⁷

Strowski remembers in this connection that St. Vincent de Paul said he saw in St. Francis the living Gospel -- the Gospel which forbids useless words and long discourse. Hence he considers it a great mistake to find, as some have done, the image of Francis de Sales in the speech of d'Urfé's druid Adamas.

This critic is impressed by our author's faithful treatment of the minute details of every-day life: "He goes so far that he would be very close to indiscretion if he did not know so well how 'to say all that he wishes to say and to make understood without saying it all that he does not wish to say.' "28 Strowski credits St. Francis with bringing the experimental evidence of experience to the very realm of mysticism, of substituting psychology for metaphysics. And he attributes to his work the fact that for a century following him the Church bent its efforts more to the creation of personalities than to the formulation of doctrine or the solution of the social ques-

26. Fortunat Strowski, op. cit., p. 145.

27. Ibid., p. 174.

28. Ibid., p. 258.

tion. He concludes that if we are to reform society, we may well heed St. Francis' method of recreating first the personalities of the individuals.

Delplanque, who has studied St. Francis as a humanist and a Latin writer, calls attention to the fact that his allegories are drawn not only from Nature but also from the Bible. He adds that this great imagination with "the sense of symbol" is not ruled by a severe taste, that there is too much artifice.²⁹ Yet he commends the rare discretion and taste with which St. Francis used the learning of classical antiquity in his sermons, compared with the other sacred orators of his time.³⁰ In the Latin sermons Delplanque finds allusions to the following ancient authors: Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Epictetus, Cicero, Seneca, Herodotus, Diogenes Laertius, Tacitus, Suetonius, Valerius Maximus (a naturalist), Pliny, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. Of these, more than half of the citations are from Pliny.³¹ Turning to the Introduction à la vie dévote and the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, Delplanque remarks that the natural histories developed in them must have been a great charm for the contemporaries of St. Francis:

Que ces histoires soient profanes ou naturelles,
 saint François de Sales a sans doute le souci de les
 rendre utiles à son auditoire, de faire mieux comprendre

29. Albert Delplanque, St. François de Sales humaniste et écrivain latin (Lille, Facultés Catholiques, 1907), p. 46.

30. Ibid., p. 50.

31. Ibid., p. 130.

ou plus facilement accepter par elles une vérité; mais il les aime trop; il les emploie à tout propos et même hors de propos.³²

From the same letter in which our author tells Mgr. Fremyot that "the supreme artifice is to have no artifice," Delplanque quotes another passage, this one upon the use of similitudes:

'Elles ont une efficace incroyable à bien éclairer l'entendement et à esmouvoir la volonté ... Celles qui sont tirées des histoires naturelles, si l'histoire est belle et l'application belle, c'est un double lustre.' Ajoutons, car c'est bien la pensée de Saint François de Sales, que le lustre est triple, pour lui et pour le public qui le lit, quand ces histoires viennent de l'antiquité.³³

This critic then takes up the charge of naïveté and credulity, that St. Francis, upon the word of Aristotle and of Pliny, believed in a fantastic Nature.³⁴ This charge, he believes, comes from the fact that in the Introduction à la vie dévote, a popular work, the author cites the commonly received opinions of his time without discussing them. Except one or two cases where he names Pliny and Aristotle, he does not mention from whom he takes his accounts of Nature. "Et cela lui donne l'air de les admettre sans discussion, sans même douter un peu de leur vérité."³⁵ But it is quite different with the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, where the author has promised to cite his authorities wherever possible. In this work, says

32. Albert Delplanque, op. cit., p. 132.

33. Ibid., p. 145.

34. Ibid., p. 146.

35. Loc. cit.

Delplanque:

Il est visible, çà et là, qu'il doute, qu'il laisse à Pline la responsabilité de ce qu'il avance d'après lui... Il a exprimé son doute pour bon nombre de ces comparaisons; là où il ne l'a pas exprimé, on peut croire cependant qu'il l'a éprouvé. Préoccupé avant tout de 'l'attention au service des âmes', il n'a vu dans toutes ces histoires naturelles, souvent si extraordinaires, que l'utilité qu'on pouvait en tirer, sans se soucier de leur vérité, sans croire, la plupart du temps, à leur vérité.³⁶

Delplanque cites Dom Mackey, perhaps the most learned commentator of St. Francis, as offering substantially the same answer to this charge of credulity.

Comparing the Introduction à la vie dévote and the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, he finds that great progress has been made in the latter:

Il y a progrès ... pour l'exactitude des comparaisons qui en sont tirées. François de Sales les fait entrer avec beaucoup moins d'artifice dans sa composition. Il s'en faut de très peu qu'elles ne soient toutes parfaitement appropriées ou adaptées à l'idée abstraite que l'auteur veut exprimer vivement et comme peindre à l'imagination.³⁷... On a pu voir, on a pu sentir aussi qu'il y a là beaucoup de poésie, beaucoup d'agrément littéraire, surtout pour des lecteurs épris de l'antiquité comme les contemporains de Saint François de Sales...³⁸ Un autre caractère de ces similitudes, c'est qu'elles sont plus développées que celles de l'Introduction à la vie dévote, quelques-unes jusqu'à devenir de vraies allégories, qu'elles sont moins impersonnelles, que l'auteur y met plus de son imagination et de son cœur.³⁹

Il y a un très grand progrès vers une construction analytique et purement française, celle de Balzac, de Vaugelas et des grands écrivains du XVII^e siècle.⁴⁰

36. Loc. cit.

37. Ibid., p. 152.

38. Ibid., p. 154.

39. Ibid., p. 155.

40. Ibid., p. 167.

Jacquinet hails St. Francis as the most original of the French prose writers between Montaigne and Bossuet,⁴¹ and as far superior to the other orators of his time such as Pierre de Besse and Seguiran, with whose style he has, nevertheless, much in common. He defends him against the charge of pedant:

Chez lui, les pensées subtiles, les images raffinées n'ont rien de pédantesque; le bel esprit dans ses sermons n'est point affecté, au sens propre du mot, et n'a rien d'ambitieux: ce n'est point la recherche étudiée d'effets surprenants et nouveaux: c'est un tribut involontaire payé à la mode par une imagination vive et brillante; ... On retrouve, on sent jusque dans ses combinaisons d'idées ou d'images les plus singulières, dans ses paraphrases et ses paraboles les plus inattendues et les moins simples, la plus parfaite simplicité d'âme, une exquise candeur, l'oubli de soi le plus complet, une onction tendre et charmante qui gagne le coeur.⁴²

41. P. Jacquinet, Des Prédicateurs du XVII^e siècle avant Bossuet (Paris: Didier, 1863), p. 75.

42. Ibid., p. 82.

CHAPTER II

DOMESTIC AND WILD ANIMALS

The animal creation, as it occurs in the works of St. Francis de Sales, falls naturally into four classes: domestic animals, wild animals, birds, insects and worms. Before taking up the first group, we shall consider the forty-six references to animals and creatures in general.¹ Of these the majority are widely scattered, only a few bearing on the same thought. We find, however, a group of six references in which beasts are mentioned in a depreciative sense.² Twice men are likened in no uncomplimentary sense³ to the animals, and four times attention is called to the differences⁴ between men and beasts. In three cases all the creatures are called to glorify⁵ the Creator. On this subject St. Francis of Assisi⁶ and David the Psalmist⁷ are cited.

1. V. D., 4, 154, 164, 225, 270, 305; Tr., I, 345, 350, 354, 355, 381, 387; Tr., II, 54, 69, 70, 71, 77, 101, 158, 161, 167, 172, 193, 197, 203, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 232, 303, 314, 316, 323, 369, 413, 414; J. P., II, 16; O. F., III, 147, 178, 183; J. A., II, 309, 325; S. F., II, 212, 223.

2. V. D., 305; Tr., II, 54, 158, 203, 227; J. A., II, 309.

3. Tr., I, 350; Tr., II, 228.

4. V. D., 164; Tr., I, 345, 350; Tr., II, 414.

5. Tr., II, 69, 70, 71.

6. Tr., II, 70.

7. Tr., II, 69.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

BOVINES

By the word of God idolatry with its adherents was to be overturned like the calves⁸ who pasture in Lebanon. Men are not drawn to God by bonds of iron⁹ like the bulls. One controls the senses,¹⁰ like oxen, by art and industry. The intellectual part of the soul¹¹ which strives for virtue is compared to the oxen of Job, who tilled the earth while the donkeys (the senses - lower faculties) devoured the result of their work. From venial sin one passes to mortal, not noticing the change, as the man who carried the calf until it was a great ox.¹²

CAMEL

It is love and humility that God rewards, not the dignity of the offices one holds. In order to illustrate this teaching, the author four times cites the case of Rebecca watering the camels¹³ of Isaac.

DOG

Of seventeen references to the dog, nine are comparisons

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- 8. J. P., II, 25.
 - 9. Tr., I, 416.
 - 10. Tr., I, 322.
 - 11. Tr., I, 351.
 - 12. Tr., II, 8.
 - 13. V. D., 8, 115; Tr., II, 228, 229.

drawn from the chase.¹⁴ The following is illustrative of these and of St. Francis' psychological method in dealing with souls:

Les chiens les plus sages et mieux dressés tombent souvent en défaut, perdans la piste et le sentiment pour la variété des ruses dont les cerfs usent, faysans les harvaris, donnant le change, et pratiquans mille malices pour s'eschapper devant la meute: et nous perdons souvent de veue et de connoissance nostre propre coeur en l'infinie diversité des mouvemens par lesquels il se tourne en tant de façons et avec une si grande promptitude qu'on ne peut discerner ses erres.¹⁵

Of the remaining scattered allusions¹⁶ to the dog, all but one adhere to the figurative use. This one quotes Tertulian¹⁷ on the subject of Roman cruelty in exposing their children to the dogs.

DONKEY

The donkey is associated with several ideas, one of which is the conception of humility and small worth in general. Saul,¹⁸ looking for the donkeys of his father, found the kingdom of Israel. The oxen of Job¹⁹ (see Bovines) tilled the earth while the useless donkeys pastured around them. Firei-ous²⁰ at the end of his life painted things of small importance, like donkeys loaded with herbs, which caused Pliny to

14. V. D., 83; Tr., I, 487; Tr., II, 34, 84, 97, 233, 251, 283, 354.

15. Tr., II, 84.

16. V. D., 73, 136, 154, 190, 201; Tr., II, 138, 310, 401.

17. Tr., II, 401.

18. V. D., 115.

19. Tr., I, 351.

20. Tr., II, 381.

think that he did so in order to lessen his great reputation. Yet these paintings were held in more esteem than the great works of others -- such was his skill. Similarly, small works done in perfect humility find great favor with God. When Joseph²¹ sent his father the treasures of Egypt, he also gave him, as a lesser gift, the donkeys which bore them.

Carnal pleasures²² are more fit to be sought after by donkeys than by men.

Three times the human body²³ is compassionately compared to a poor little donkey. These comparisons, among the most beautiful of his works, portray perfectly the Salesian spirit:

Balaam monté sur son ânesse allait trouver Balac; mais parce qu'il n'avait pas droite intention, l'ange l'attendit en chemin avec une épée en main pour le tuer. L'ânesse, qui voyait l'ange, s'arrêta par trois diverses fois, comme rétive; Balaam, cependant, la frappait cruellement de son bâton pour la faire avancer.... Il en prend ainsi bien souvent en nos affaires; car cette femme voit son mari ou son enfant malade, et soudain, elle court au jeune, à la haine, à la discipline, comme fit David pour un pareil sujet. Hélas! chère amie, vous battez le pauvre âne, vous affligez votre corps, et il ne peut mais de votre mal, ni de quoi Dieu a son épée dégainée sur vous. Corrigez votre cœur qui est idolâtre de ce mari, ... 24

GOAT

Three times the goat appears in references to the Old Testament: goat hairs²⁵ formerly offered in the Temple, Samp-

21. Tr., II, 428.

22. V. D., 151, 167.

23. V. D., 185, 188, 189.

24. V. D., 188.

25. Tr., I, 457.

son's²⁶ tearing to pieces a lion as if it were a young goat, the troupes of goats of Galaad²⁷ (Canticle of Canticles). Twice there is mention of the division between the sheep²⁸ and the goats. The goat is credited with three marvelous characteristics: that of turning sweet almond trees²⁹ bitter with the touch of its tongue; the instinct³⁰ which causes the wounded goat to seek the herb dittany by means of which the arrow leaves its body (citation of Aristotle); lastly, the power to breathe through the ears³¹ rather than through the nostrils:

Les chèvres, selon Alcemeon, halènent par les oreilles et non par les naseaux. Il est vrai qu'Aristote le nie; or, ne sais-je ce que c'en est; mais je sais bien pourtant que notre coeur halène par l'oreille, et que comme il aspire et exhale ses pensées par la langue, il respire aussi par l'oreille, par laquelle il reçoit les pensées des autres.³¹

In the chapter ST. FRANCIS AND THE CRITICS we have referred to Delplanque's³² defense of our author against the charge of credulity. He has shown how, in the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, St. Francis expresses doubts, how he deliberately leaves the responsibility for the marvelous aspects of their Nature to the authors in whose works he has found them. We may add that St. Francis expresses doubt not only in the Traité but also, as we have just seen, in the popular Introduction à

26. Tr., II, 38.

27. Tr., II, 382.

28. V. D., 84, 174.

29. V. D., 156.

30. J. A., II, 309.

31. V. D., 178.

32. Op. Cit., p. 146.

la vie dévote.

HORSE

Of sixteen references to the horse, four compare man³³ to this animal, particularly the devout soul³⁴ who is like a well trained horse in the hands of his master. Anger³⁵ is like a horse out of control. One controls the senses,³⁶ like horses, by art, industry and force. Carnal pleasures³⁷ in man cannot be called affection any more than they can be so called in horses. The six³⁸ scattered allusions to the horse include one³⁹ in which maladies of the heart as well as those of the body are said to come on horseback.

MULE

Man⁴⁰ is twice compared to mules. One controls the senses,⁴¹ like mules, by art and industry.

SHEEP

The sheep is second only to the bee in the list of our author's favorite animals. Both the "chère avette" and the

33. Tr., II, 209, 240, 263, 434.

34. Tr., II, 240, 263.

35. Tr., II, 350, 354.

36. Tr., I, 322, 322, 323.

37. V. D., 167.

38. V. D., 20, 83, 121; Tr., I, 385, 387; Tr., II, 545.

39. V. D., 20.

40. V. D., 124; Tr., II, 209.

41. Tr., I, 322.

"chère brebis" hold high places in his affection, though the habits and characteristics of the former are more realistically depicted, indicating closer personal observation, whereas the sheep is treated in a more conventional and symbolic manner. This animal appears on thirty-one occasions, eleven of which represent the Savior⁴² and an equal number Christians⁴³ or the devout soul.

The Savior is the true lamb:

Car tout ainsi que ceux qui couchent sur l'herbe nommée agnus castus deviennent chastes et pudiques, de même reposant votre coeur sur Notre-Seigneur qui est le vrai agneau chaste et immaculé, vous verrez que bientôt votre âme et votre coeur se trouveront purifiés de toutes souillures et lubricités.⁴⁴

The wolf (the world) is the enemy of the sheep (Christians):

En lieu que, comme dit saint Paul, 'la charité est bénigne, au contraire le monde est malin;' au lieu que la charité ne pense point de mal, au contraire le monde pense toujours mal; et quand il ne peut accuser nos actions, il accuse nos intentions. Soit que les moutons aient des cornes ou qu'ils n'en aient point, qu'ils soient blancs ou qu'ils soient noirs, le loup ne laissera pas de les manger, s'il peut.⁴⁵

The story of the colored lambs of Jacob⁴⁶ is four times used to explain: 1) the necessity of considering the dignity of the sacrament of marriage;⁴⁷ 2) the transformation⁴⁸ of

42. V. D., 84, 84, 156; Tr., I, 481; Tr., II, 34, 210, 229, 287; J. A., II, 323; S. P., II, 200, 207.

43. V. D., 8, 209, 248; Tr., II, 199, 225, 275, 348; S. P., II, 196, 214; 215, 219.

44. V. D., 156.

45. V. D., 248.

46. V. D., 227; Tr., II, 41, 140, 198.

47. V. D., 227.

48. Tr., II, 41, 198.

the soul which contemplates Divinity; 3) St. Francis' (of Assisi) love of God and the stigmata.⁴⁹

Five scattered references⁵⁰ to the sheep include one⁵¹ which mentions the natural attraction of man and sheep, and another⁵² which remarks that the enraged elephant is calmed by the sight of a lamb.

SWINE

The sight of a lamb eaten by a hog suggests the death of the Savior.⁵³ Carnal pleasures⁵⁴ are more fit to be sought after by donkeys and hogs than by men. The Prodigal Son⁵⁵ leaving the swine represents man withdrawing from sin.

WILD ANIMALS

BASILISK

Evil people⁵⁶ have poison in their eyes and in their breath like the basilisks.

BAT

It is not to be wondered at that the peacock is more hand-

49. Tr., II, 140.

50. V. D., 139, 174; Tr., I, 354; Tr., II, 92, 349.

51. Tr., I, 354.

52. V. D., 139.

53. V. D., 84.

54. V. D., 151.

55. Tr., II, 310.

56. V. D., 156.

some than a bat, for the beauty of the universe⁵⁷ requires variety.

BEAR

In two cases the bear represents temptations.⁵⁸ In one case the roar of bears represents vocal prayer.⁵⁹

BUFFALO

Men⁶⁰ are not drawn to God by bonds of iron like the buffaloes.

DEER

Seventeen references⁶¹ to the deer represent a number of poetic images and show at the same time considerable knowledge of the habits of this animal, particularly those connected with the chase. As the deer is best able to run when he has eaten neither too much nor too little, so man⁶² makes his best progress in the devout life when his body is moderately fed and his heart is not charged with useless affections. Like the deer in the stronghold of his retreat is the devout soul⁶³ in

57. Tr., I, 401.

58. V. D., 260, 262.

59. Tr., II, 90.

60. Tr., I, 416.

61. V. D., 57, 78, 179, 186; Tr., I, 375, 429, 487; Tr., II, 34, 42, 77, 84, 112, 251, 283; J. P., II, 26; J. A., II, 308, 309.

62. V. D., 57, 186.

63. V. D., 78, 179.

meditation and in the firmness of his resolutions. The inclination to love God⁶⁴ is like the collars one finds on deers bearing the names of great princes who have caught and loosed them. The deer long pursued desires water as our hearts⁶⁵ desire God. They say that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty and would never succeed but for the fright caused by thunder, in which she resembles the Apostles⁶⁶ who, pregnant with the knowledge of God and hearing the Holy Ghost in Pentecost Day, were enabled to bring forth their holy preaching. This comparison could be cited in support of Sayous' statement that St. Francis sometimes insists too much upon a figure and spoils it by a conclusion of bad taste.⁶⁷ It is important to remember here that men of Sayous' generation and of our own are much more sensitive on the subject of "bad taste" than were the contemporaries of St. Francis de Sales. Dom Mackey, in the Preface to his translation of the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, takes account of this fact:

It has been decided to omit or modify in this popular edition a few sentences in which the Saint refers to certain delicate matters -- in particular to certain Bible narratives which to his original readers were matters of familiar knowledge -- with the happy simplicity of his day. As he says in his Preface, 'it is of extreme importance to remember the age in which one writes,' and there can be no doubt that if he had been writing for this age he would have consulted its requirements, and would have conformed to the universal practice of modern

64. Tr., I, 375.

65. Tr., I, 429, 487; Tr., II, 42.

66. J. P., II, 26.

67. Pierre André Sayous, op. cit., I, 50.

spiritual writers by forbearing reference to these subjects. He only introduces them incidentally and merely for the purpose of illustrating his main argument. The omissions or alterations taken altogether would not amount to more than two pages.⁶⁸

The Savior⁶⁹ is twice compared to a deer. The Blessed Virgin⁷⁰ is like some deer which die long after receiving the fatal wound but unlike those which, according to Pliny, seek the herb dittany in order to be freed of the arrow which has wounded them. Three times the author describes circumstances⁷¹ which cause the dogs to lose the scent. The following remarkably apt comparison will illustrate these:

Quand le cerf a passé la nuit en quelque lieu, la matinée mesme l'assentiment et le vent en est encor frais; le soir il est plus malaysé à prendre; mays à mesme que ses alleures sont vieilles et dures, les chiens vont aussi perdant connoissance. Quand la charité a regné quelque tems en une âme, on y treuve ses passées, sa piste, ses alleures, son vent, pour quelque tems apres qu'elle l'a quittée; mays petit à petit en fin tout cela s'esvanouit, et on pert toute sorte de connoissance que jamais la charité y ait esté.⁷²

DRAGON

The Psalmist calls all the creatures,⁷³ even the dragon, to glorify the Creator.

68. Henry Benedict Mackey, O. S. B. (Trans.), Treatise on the Love of God (London: Burns Oates E. Washbourne, Ltd., 1884), Introduction, p. xxix.

69. Tr., II, 77, 283.

70. J. A., II, 308, 309.

71. Tr., II, 34, 84, 251.

72. Tr., II, 34.

73. Tr., II, 69.

ELEPHANT

Nothing calms the enraged elephant⁷⁴ so much as the sight of a lamb. The elephant is the most worthy⁷⁵ of animals and the one who shows the most sense in the matter of sex. The elephant reproduces⁷⁶ only once, but this one calf is worth more than all the rabbits in the world.

FISH

Fish are twice mentioned in references to the creation⁷⁷ of the world. The devout souls and the blessed⁷⁸ in Heaven who enjoy the infinite goodness of God are compared to fish which swim freely in the ocean yet never know all parts of it. As the fish called echineis or remore⁷⁹ has the power to stop a ship but not to set it in motion, so free will can refuse to cooperate with grace but it is not the cause of the presence of grace in the soul. The Psalmist called the fish and all creatures to glorify the Creator.⁸⁰ They say that there is a little land animal in the Indies⁸¹ which, by constant association with the fish, is eventually changed into a fish, just as the devout soul, by conforming to the will of God, changes

74. V. D., 139.

75. V. D., 237.

76. Tr., II, 323.

77. Tr., I, 381; S. P., II, 212.

78. Tr., I, 499; Tr., II, 51.

79. Tr., II, 20.

80. Tr., II, 69.

81. Tr., II, 197; O. F., III, 147.

his mortal for an immortal life. They say that there is a river in Boetia in which the fish seem to be golden, but the fish when removed from these waters have the natural color of other fish. So we may consider afflictions⁸² which viewed in themselves are bitter, but in the will of God are all golden and precious. They say that the fish which is called sea-lantern⁸³ holds his shining tongue above the waves in the midst of the storm. Thus in the sea of His Passion, His soul grievously afflicted, the Savior maintained the summit of His spirit resplendent with glory and happiness. They say that there is a fish called sea-toad or sea-devil⁸⁴ which, stirring up the mud at the bottom of the sea, lies in ambush for the little fish who cannot see well in the cloudy water. It is the same with the devil of Hell for he makes his ambush in sadness. Sin⁸⁵ is like the Dead Sea which kills all the fish who enter it.

FOX

Temptations, small sins, apparent goods (distractions from the ultimate good God) are small foxes⁸⁶ which steal into and demolish our vineyards. (This figure is borrowed from the Canticle of Canticles.)⁸⁷

82. Tr., II, 248.

83. Tr., II, 259.

84. Tr., II, 444.

85. Tr., II, 407.

86. V. D., 178, 222; Tr., II, 4.

87. V. D., 222.

HEDGEHOG

Prayer of recollection⁸⁸ is compared to a hedgehog drawing within itself. However, the former is a grace dependent upon the will of God, whereas the latter is a voluntary act of the animal.

LEOPARD

The leopard is mentioned in a comparison in which this animal represents sin.⁸⁹

LION

The lioness accosted by the leopard goes quickly to wash herself lest the lion be offended. The soul⁹⁰ who has consented to sin ought to clean itself as quickly as possible for the respect that it owes to the divine Majesty who sees it. Sampson⁹¹ tore to pieces the lion as if it had been a little goat. The hen,⁹² having become a mother, has the heart of a lion. The naturalists say that the lion who insults all animals fears only the cocks⁹³ (play upon the word gallos - Franks; the lion represents the armies of the Turks.).

88. Tr., II, 107.

89. V. D., 96.

90. V. D., 96.

91. Tr., II, 38.

92. Tr., II, 348.

93. O. F., III, 173.

MONKEY

The monkey represents worldly honors,⁹⁴ the devil⁹⁵ who by his apish tricks can produce a semblance of ecstasy to deceive the weak, worldlings⁹⁶ whose melancholy and good spirits resemble those of apes and monkeys.

OYSTER

The oyster is said to live in the sea without taking one drop of sea water, opening its shell only to receive the dew which falls from heaven, from which it conceives and produces the pearl. The chaste heart and the devout soul⁹⁷ are like the oyster, living in the world but receiving their sustenance and their happiness only from Heaven. Those who fish for oysters esteem them only for the pearls. Similarly, we should esteem the love of creatures⁹⁸ only in and for the love of God. Does the oyster belong to the pearl, or the pearl to the oyster? In divine love we are possessed by God, but we also possess God.⁹⁹ The waves wash up to the shore and carry away small objects like oysters, who, in this respect, resemble the weak¹⁰⁰ buffeted from affliction to consolation.

94. V. D., 123.

95. Tr., II, 164.

96. Tr., II, 445.

97. V. D., 4, 150; Tr., I, 458; Tr., II, 21, 59, 109.

98. Tr., II, 316.

99. Tr., II, 49.

100. V. D., 82.

RABBIT

As the hares become white in our mountains in winter because they see and eat only snow, so the devout soul¹⁰¹ by frequent Communion will become all beautiful, good and pure. In the spring the scent of the flowers surpasses that of the deer and the hare so that the dogs often lose the trail, and the devout soul¹⁰² in the time of consolation often forgets the attention it should have for the will of God. The love of creatures¹⁰³ produces a multitude of works but when divine love does its work, it surpasses all, just as rabbits have an incomparable fertility, while elephants reproduce only once. But this elephant is worth more than all the rabbits in the world.

RAT

As the rats of the Nile are formed little by little and do not receive life in all their members at the same time, we¹⁰⁴ do not live suddenly nor do we die in a moment.

REPTILES

Of eighteen references to snakes, three times the serpent represents evil-sayers.¹⁰⁵ (Aristotle says that the serpent

101. V. D., 106.

102. Tr., II, 251.

103. Tr., II, 323.

104. O. F., III, 148.

105. V. D., 138, 205, 206.

has a forked tongue.)¹⁰⁶ Anger¹⁰⁷ is like the serpent which easily draws his whole body where he can put his head. Twice the serpent's bite represents love;¹⁰⁸ three times serpents represent sins.¹⁰⁹ Tribulations and our passions can be transformed into useful things, just as the serpent was changed into the rod of Moses.¹¹⁰ There is a natural antipathy¹¹¹ between man and the serpent. There are five scattered references¹¹² which mention the serpent incidentally.

Reptiles other than snakes mentioned by our author are the chameleon, the lizard and the crocodile. The soul who desires God while possessing Him is like the chameleon:

S'il est vray que le cameleon vive de l'air, partout où il va dans l'air il a de quoy se repaistre; que s'il se remue d'un lieu à l'autre, ce n'est pas pour chercher de quoy se rassasier, mais pour s'exercer dedans son aliment, comme les poissons dedans la mer. Qui desire Dieu en le possédant ne le desire pas pour le chercher, mais pour exercer cette affection dedans le bien mesme de quel il jouit....¹¹³

Lizards, with serpents and other poisonous beasts, represent sins.¹¹⁴ Slander¹¹⁵ is like the crocodiles who harm only those who fear them. The crocodile never ceases to grow while he lives, in which he represents equally the good and the bad.¹¹⁶

106. V. D., 205.

107. V. D., 140.

108. V. D., 171, 179.

109. V. D., 216, 225; Tr., II, 369.

110. Tr., II, 247, 441.

111. V. D., 354.

112. V. D., 201; Tr., II, 69, 132, 353, 430.

113. Tr., II, 51.

114. Tr., II, 369.

115. V. D., 135.

116. Tr., I, 454.

SALAMANDER

They say that the salamander puts out the fire on which it lies; and sin¹¹⁷ ruins the friendship in which it lodges.

SPONGE

As there is a great attraction between water and the sponge which are of opposite nature, so in human love¹¹⁸ persons of opposite qualities are sometimes more strongly attracted to each other than are those who are alike.

SQUIRREL

As young girls love their husbands but love also their pets: dogs, squirrels and other such toys, so the apprentices of the devout life truly love the Sacred Spouse but do so with a multitude of distractions.¹¹⁹

TIGER

The maternal care that the tigress shows for one of her young whom she has found is like the care of a spiritual adviser¹²⁰ for the souls whom he directs.

TORTOISE

A tortoise falling on his head was responsible for the

117. V. D., 183.

118. Tr., I, 342.

119. Tr., II, 310.

120. V. D., 7.

death of the poet Aeschilus.¹²¹ Prayer of recollection¹²² is compared to a tortoise drawing within itself.

WHALE

May the soul be cast into the sea of penance and received into the stomach of the whale, that is hope,¹²³ for without hope penance is only a storm of despair.

WILD-BOAR

The devout soul perfects himself in virtue as the wild-boar sharpens his teeth:

Car, comme les sangliers pour aiguïser leurs défenses les frottent et fourbissent avec leurs autres dents lesquelles reciproquement en demeurent toutes fort affilées et tranchantes, ainsi l'homme vertueux ayant entrepris de se perfectionner en la vertu de laquelle il a plus de besoin pour sa défense, il la doit limer et affiler par l'exercice des autres vertus, lesquelles en affinant celle-là, en deviennent toutes plus excellentes et mieux polies.¹²⁴

WOLF

The law of charity permits us to decry the enemies of God;¹²⁵ it is charity to cry wolf when he is among the sheep. The wolf (enemies of the devout soul)¹²⁶ will eat the sheep if he can. Miraculous graces have changed wolves (great sinners

121. Tr., I, 388.

122. Tr., II, 107.

123. J. P., II, 32.

124. V. D., 111.

125. V. D., 209.

126. V. D., 248.

and persecutors)¹²⁷ into shepherds. Twice the wolf represents temptations.¹²⁸

127. Tr., I, 415.

128. V. D., 260, 262.

CHAPTER III

BIRDS

Of twenty-six references to birds in general, thirteen have to do with the devout soul.¹ Two of these are here quoted in full because they are representative of those uses of Nature in which one is struck by the perfect aptness of the comparison. They illustrate, also, Brémond's observation that St. Francis "lives, he caresses the details, but he never loses sight of his goal."² Strowski puts the thought in a slightly different way when he says: "les images, les allégories, les comparaisons ... ce sont autant d'efforts que fait l'orateur pour que l'auditeur entre pleinement dans sa pensée."³

Les oiseaux demeurent pris dans les filets et lacs, parce que s'y trouvant engagés ils se débattent et remuent dérèglement pour en sortir, ce que faisant ils s'enveloppent toujours tant plus. Quand donc vous serez pressée du désir d'être délivrée de quelque mal ou de parvenir à quelque bien, ayant toute chose mettez votre esprit en repos et tranquillité, ...⁴

1. V. D., 63, 67, 78, 188, 268, 291; Tr., I, 375, 499; Tr., II, 33, 123, 225, 310; J. A., II, 326.

2. Henri Brémond, Literary History of Religious Thought in France, p. 26.

3. Fortunat Strowski, Introduction à l'histoire du sentiment religieux en France au 17^e siècle, p. 174.

4. V. D., 268.

Notre nature humaine déchoit aisément de ses bonnes affections, à cause de la fragilité et mauvaise inclination de notre chair, qui appesantit l'âme et la tire toujours contre-bas si elle ne s'élève souvent en haut à vive force de résolution: ainsi que les oiseaux retombent soudain en terre, s'ils ne multiplient les élancements et traits d'ailes, pour se maintenir au vol.⁵

The following is an example of the thirteen remaining scattered references⁶ to birds in general. The author quotes St. Gregory Nazianzene:

'Ta naturelle beauté suffit pour ton mari; que si elle est pour plusieurs hommes, comme un filet tendu pour une troupe d'oiseaux, qu'en arrivera-t-il?'⁷

APODE

According to Aristotle,⁸ the apodes are certain birds with legs so short and feet so weak that they are not able to lift their weight from the earth and rise in flight if the wind does not come to their aid. St. Francis sees in this bird the image of the sinner,⁹ who, each time he falls, can return to the air of God's grace if he will but cooperate with the heavenly inspiration which comes like a sacred wind to help him into the air. Saint Peter¹⁰ was a poor apode when he denied his Master, but in his repentance he responded freely to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

5. V. D., 291.

6. V. D., 43, 121, 121, 170, 248; Tr., I, 381; Tr., II, 69, 78, 172, 315, 440; O. F., III, 183; S. P., II, 212.

7. V. D., 170.

8. Tr., I, 405.

9. Tr., I, 406, 418, 419.

10. Tr., I, 407, 449.

CANARY

As the song of the nightingale is superior to that of the canary,¹¹ so is the praise rendered to the Creator by the Savior of superior to that of all the devout souls.

CHICKEN

"Les gens de bien"¹² who have not yet attained devotion fly to God as the chicken flies -- heavily, low and seldom. We¹³ are baby chicks under the wing of the Lord. The cock,¹⁴ an instrument of divine providence, aroused St. Peter. One who would force food down his friend's throat would be treating him like a capon¹⁵ that he wished to fatten. Christian zeal makes us jealous for the purity of souls as the mother hen for the safety of her chicks: "Voyés, disent les anciens, voyés quel amour, quel soin, et quelle jalousie une mère-poule a pour ses poussins (car nostre Seigneur n'a pas estimé cette comparayson indigne de son Evangile.)"¹⁶ From the funeral oration for the Duc de Mercoeur comes a play upon the word gallos: "Leo qui omnibus insultat animalibus, solos pertimescit gallos, disent les naturalistes. C'est grand cas que la présence de ce capitaine françois ayt peu arrester

11. Tr., II, 77.

12. V. D., 11.

13. V. D., 85; Tr., II, 443.

14. Tr., I, 407.

15. Tr., II, 203.

16. Tr., II, 348.

la course des armes Turquesques, et qu'à son aspect leur lune se soit esclipsée."¹⁷

CROW

The Blessed Virgin,¹⁸ the unique dove, has attained such a perfection of devotion that the other devout souls, in comparison with her, deserve rather the name of crows than of doves.

DOVE

Of thirty references to the dove, fifteen liken this bird to the devout soul,¹⁹ which has the wings of a dove to fly to God, which meditates like a dove, which has singleness of devotion like that of the dove for its mate. The Blessed Virgin²⁰ is four times called the unique dove. Twice the voice of the turtle-dove is mentioned from the Song of Solomon;²¹ twice the Sacred Spouse²² is described as having the eyes of a dove; and twice the term dove is used vocatively as a term of affection.²³ The love of married people²⁴ is twice compared to that of doves. Once the various teachings and devout practices of the

17. O. F., 111, 178.

18. Tr., II, 315.

19. V. D., 11, 250, 282, 305; Tr., I, 301; Tr., II, 9, 86, 89, 90, 130, 180, 245, 308, 314, 343.

20. Tr., I, 397, 479, 481; Tr., II, 315.

21. V. D., 241; Tr., II, 90.

22. V. D., 155; Tr., II, 100.

23. Tr., II, 59, 78.

24. V. D., 227; Tr., II, 423.

Church²⁵ are compared to the variegated plumage of the dove. In one instance the dove is said to love the kestrel (hawk) because he frightens birds of prey as humility repulses Satan.²⁶ In another instance the turtle-dove, the most sombre of birds, is said to sing in Paradise.²⁷

EAGLE

Three references to the eagle have to do with the rejuvenation of this bird when he rids himself of old feathers by flying through flame and water. For the fact of the rejuvenation, David the Psalmist is cited, and for the method, the Rabbi Saadiah. In this connection the sinner²⁸ who frees himself from sin is twice compared to the bird, and once the Savior²⁹ is described as being renewed in the flame of His charity and in the bloody sea of His Passion. The devout soul³⁰ is like the eagle flying to God, but as this bird has greater breadth of vision than it has strength to fly, so the devout soul has more understanding of the love of God than will to fly to Him. Two legends are recounted concerning the eagle. One relates how a young girl of the isle of Sestos³¹ having tenderly cared for a young eagle, he threw himself upon her funeral pyre and

25. Tr., I, 301.

26. V. D., 121.

27. Tr., II, 78.

28. V. D., 26; Tr., II, 169.

29. S. P., II, 203.

30. V. D., 11; Tr., I, 370.

31. Tr., II, 172.

died for love of her. Why does not the devout soul practice the same love for the Savior? The other legend is taken from "the authors who have treated of the nature of animals" and says that at times the eagle's beak³² grows to such an extent as to interfere with his taking nourishment. Whereupon, the bird breaks his beak upon a rock. Those who do not take the meat of Faith in the proper manner should break the overgrown point of their "esprit" against the rock of the Church. In the sermon on the Assumption the Blessed Virgin³³ is called a holy eagle.

GOLDFINCH

As the song of the nightingale is superior to that of the goldfinch,³⁴ so is the praise rendered to the Creator by the Savior superior to that of all the devout souls, and in the same way is the love of the Seraphins more ardent than that of the angels of the last order.

HAWK

The hawk appears seven times under four classifications: sparrow-hawk, falcon, kestrel, and tercel. But the allusions have nothing to do with the classifications of the hawk as such. Two have already been mentioned in connection with the dove.³⁵

32. S. P., II, 223.

33. J. A., II, 313.

34. Tr., II, 77, 381.

35. See Dove, V. D., 121; Tr., II, 9.

The devout soul³⁶ in meditation is like the sparrowhawk whose movement is limited while tethered to its perch, but who flies quickly to the prey once it is loosed. Twice the obedience³⁷ of the hawk is considered, once to contrast it with man rebellious toward God; and once to show how the obedience of animals, like the obedience of the senses, must be secured with industry and art. The hawk who dropped a turtle on his head was responsible for the death of the poet Aeschilus.³⁸

KINGFISHER

The kingfisher puts his nest on the seashore, but it is so constructed that the water can never enter it. Likewise, the devout soul³⁹ is open only to Heaven and does not admit the love of riches and empty things.

LARK

As the lark sings more clearly the higher it flies inspired by the beauty of the sun, so does the devout soul,⁴⁰ ascending to the Divinity, see that it is always above all praise.

LINNET

As the song of the nightingale is superior to that of the

36. V. D., 67; Tr., I, 429.

37. V. D., 84; Tr., I, 322.

38. Tr., I, 388.

39. V. D., 157.

40. Tr., II, 80.

linnet,⁴¹ so is the praise rendered to the Creator by the Savior superior to that of all the devout souls.

NIGHTINGALE

Of nine references to the nightingale five represent the singers of the divine praises.⁴² As the young nightingale learns to sing from the big ones, let us learn from the saints⁴³ to sing the praises of God. St. Francis of Assisi⁴⁴ is twice called a nightingale. The blessed souls⁴⁵ in Paradise are heavenly nightingales who sing eternally. According to Pliny, these birds take such pleasure⁴⁶ in singing that in the effort to sing more and more they sometimes burst their throats and die. As the nightingale first learns to sing from the big ones and later sings for pleasure,⁴⁷ so the devout souls love God first to please Him, then for the pleasure they have in loving Him. The conversion⁴⁸ of St. Pacome is like the awakening of a nightingale at dawn. Twice the song of the nightingale is compared to that of other birds.⁴⁹ As the song of the nightingale is superior to that of the canary, the linnet and the goldfinch, so is the praise rendered to the Creator by the

41. Tr., II, 77.

42. V. D., 90; Tr., II, 67; Tr., II, 68, 73, 74.

43. V. D., 90.

44. Tr., II, 68, 74.

45. Tr., II, 73.

46. Tr., II, 67.

47. Tr., II, 273.

48. Tr., I, 421.

49. Tr., II, 74, 381.

Savior superior to that of all the devout souls. As the song of the apprentice nightingale is more harmonious than that of the most accomplished goldfinch, so is the love of the seraphins more ardent than that of the angels of the last order.

OSTRICH

The ostrich, who never flies, is like the sinner⁵⁰ who never flies to God. As the sun hatches the eggs of the ostrich, so does the Sun of justice⁵¹ give certitude to the truth proposed by the doctors of the Church.

OWL

The devout soul should practice solitude⁵² like the owl. David said, "I have become like the owl." The Savior⁵³ at the time of His birth was like the owl on a pile of ruins. The world⁵⁴ will always suspect our motives; let us leave this screech-owl to disturb the birds of the day. As the barn-owl has not enough sight to bear the light of midday, so the understanding⁵⁵ has not enough strength to consider the divine substance in itself.

BIRD OF PARADISE

The angels⁵⁶ are like the birds of paradise because one

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- 50. V. D., 11.
 - 51. Tr., I, 425.
 - 52. V. D., 79.
 - 53. V. D., 79.
 - 54. V. D., 248.
 - 55. Tr., I, 496.
 - 56. Tr., I, 405.

never sees them on earth except dead. St. Simeon⁵⁷ is a bird of paradise living in the air without touching earth, and saints like Augustine, Bernard, the two Catherines of Sienna and of Genes are so rare that they resemble only the bird of paradise.

PARROT

As those who come from Peru bring parrots, although gold and silver are their principal cargo, so the devout soul can take the rank and honor⁵⁸ which are rightfully his, provided they do not cost him care, anxiety or contention.

PARTRIDGE

St. John the Evangelist in fondling his pet partridge shows us how relaxation and recreation⁵⁹ are profitable. We⁶⁰ are like the partridges of Paphlagonia who have two hearts, one indulgent for ourselves and another severe for our neighbor. As the partridge hatched by another recognizes the voice of its true mother, our natural inclination⁶¹ to love God is aroused at the first knowledge that we receive of Him. As the partridge deceives the hunter by feigning inability to fly, the Devil⁶² discourages the devout soul from one good under-

57. Tr., II, 258, 315.

58. V. D., 123.

59. V. D., 212.

60. V. D., 223.

61. Tr., I, 369.

62. Tr., II, 232.

taking after another by proposing always a better one.

PEACOCK

The peacock is used to explain three undesirable traits: the seeking of honor,⁶³ dishonorable lovemaking⁶⁴ (St. Gregory Nazianzene is cited for this bird's method of exciting the female), spoiling the floor⁶⁵ (country people say that this trait offsets the peacock's usefulness in driving out spiders). This trait is likened to anger, a dangerous and little desirable aid given by Nature to reason. Once the beauty⁶⁶ of this bird is considered in contrast to the bat to explain that the beauty of the universe demands variety.

PELICAN

The devout soul should practice solitude⁶⁷ like the pelican. David said, "I have been like the pelican of the solitude." The pelican inspired by love⁶⁸ first wounds his young to let out the poison of the serpent, then wounds himself and revives his young with his own blood. Similarly, we never wound a heart with love without being suddenly wounded by it ourselves.

PHOENIX

Eight references to the phoenix have to do chiefly with

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- 63. V. D., 123.
 - 64. V. D., 177.
 - 65. Tr., II, 350.
 - 66. Tr., I, 401.
 - 67. V. D., 79.
 - 68. Tr., II, 132.

the fable concerning this bird's ability to exchange his old life for a new one by casting himself into a fire which he causes to be lighted by the rays of the sun and fanning with his wings. After death he rises, young and vigorous, from the ashes. Once the devout soul⁶⁹ is so compared to the phoenix, in that the former exchanges his human life for the life of the spirit. Three times the Blessed Virgin⁷⁰ is said to be like the phoenix, twice because of the manner of her death, and once because her body was not subject to corruption after death. Those who have just repented of their sins, and in general the apprentices⁷¹ of the devout life, are like the phoenix who has just been reborn from the ashes and cannot yet fly very well. Saints⁷² like Augustine, Bernard, the Catherines of Sienna and of Genes are so rare that they resemble not even the phoenix, but only the bird of paradise.

Two passages⁷³ on the phoenix contain detailed descriptions of the manner of his death. It is such passages which have provoked the criticism of Brunetière against anecdotes from antiquity, and probably also the criticisms of Sainte-Beuve, Sayous, Delplanque who object to the abundance of comparisons. The charge of credulity in the use of such fabled material has been answered by Delplanque, who believes that such stories are a

69. Tr., II, 166.

70. Tr., II, 189; J. A., II, 314, 314.

71. Tr., II, 390, 310, 311.

72. Tr., II, 315.

73. Tr., II, 189; J. A., II, 314.

condescension on the part of St. Francis to the literary tastes of his contemporaries.

SPARROW

The devout soul⁷⁴ should practice solitude like the sparrow. David said, "I have become like the solitary sparrow on the roof."

STORK

Because the stork when migrating carries his parents in their old age, this bird is three times cited as a model of filial devotion,⁷⁵ once as a lesson for any son, once to explain the love of the Savior for the Blessed Virgin, and once to explain His love for Saint Joseph.

SWAN

Saint Peter Celestin⁷⁶ at the point of death began to sing, like a sacred swan, the last of the psalms.

SWALLOW

The devout soul⁷⁷ is twice compared to the swallow, once because he flies often, quickly and high, and once because his vocal prayers are like the cry of that bird (his mental prayers

74. V. D., 79.

75. Tr., II, 434; J. A., II, 317; Tr., II, 187.

76. Tr., II, 177.

77. V. D., 11; Tr., II, 89.

are like the meditation of the dove).

CHAPTER IV

INSECTS AND WORMS

BEE

Probably it is the bee, more than any other single factor, which has caused the style of St. Francis to be considered "sugary." And if the bee, with the closely related thought of honey, calls to mind associations of sweetness, then the style of St. Francis is, indeed, "sugary", for we find no less than forty-five references to this favorite little animal. Our author is never tired of showing that the devout life is sweet to those who undertake it, and the life of the bee suggests to him a great variety of happy comparisons. Although nearly all his observations are obviously from personal experience, there is one citation of Aristotle¹ and another of Pliny.²

The subjects suggested by the bee fall into the following groups: the devout soul (21);³ devotion itself (2);⁴ the

1. V. D., 15.

2. Tr., II, 413.

3. V. D., 13, 55, 68, 120, 155, 182, 196, 204, 248, 250, 274, 284, 298, 304; Tr., I, 459; Tr., II, 66, 88, 92, 108, 116, 166.

4. V. D., 15, 93.

virtues, particularly charity (3);⁵ love (3);⁶ priest carrying the Host (1);⁷ the Holy Ghost (2);⁸ gens de bien (1);⁹ contrast of the bee with the drone, hornet and wasp (5);¹⁰ excess of eating (1);¹¹ ivory ship's model so small it could be covered by the wings of a bee (1);¹² good works (1);¹³ the Blessed Virgin (2), St. Bernard (1), the Duc de Mercoeur (1).¹⁴

One passage on the bee is here quoted from the Traité de l'amour de Dieu, because it reflects so well the spirit of all the others on the bee and the devout life. It illustrates, also, the method by which St. Francis uses Nature to explain theological questions, as in the following distinction between meditation and contemplation:

Les petitz mouschons des abeilles s'appellent nymphes ou schadons jusques à ce qu'ilz facent le miel, et lors on les appelle avettes ou abeilles: de mesme l'orayson s'appelle méditation jusques à ce qu'elle ayt produit le miel de la dévotion; après cela elle se convertit en contemplation. Car comme les avettes parcourent le paysage de leur contrée pour picorer çà et là et recueillir le miel, lequel ayant amassé elles travaillent sur iceluy pour le playsir qu'elles prennent en sa douceur: ainsy nous méditons pour recueillir l'amour de Dieu; mays l'ayant recueilli, nous contemplons Dieu et sommes attentifs à sa bonté pour la suavité que l'amour nous y fait trouver.¹⁵

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5. V. D., 167; Tr., I, 457; Tr., II, 397.
 6. Tr., I, 338; Tr., II, 129, 133; J. A., II, 307.
 7. V. D., 104.
 8. V. D., 234, 281.
 9. V. D., 117.
 10. V. D., 146, 174, 190, 191, 198.
 11. V. D., 236.
 12. Tr., I, 313.
 13. Tr., II, 413.
 14. Tr., II, 109; J. A., II, 307; Tr., I, 492; O. F., III, 161.
 15. Tr., II, 93.

BEETLE

Two kinds of beetles are mentioned: the cockchafers¹⁶ and the glow-worms.¹⁷ Thoughts which are applied to a subject in order to learn its causes, effects and qualities are like cockchafers who seek their nourishment flying from flower to flower. The virtues of the pagan philosophers resemble glow-worms who shine at night but lose their light at the coming of day.

BUTTERFLY

As the piraustes¹⁸ fly through the flame without burning their wings, a vigorous soul can lead a devout life in the world. Men are attracted¹⁹ to vain amusements, voluptuousness and curiosity concerning the divine judgments as butterflies to the flame in which their wings are burned. The devout soul²⁰ changes his old life for a new one as the bigatz and silk-worms change their form and from worms become butterflies.

FLIES

Venial sins, small troubles, and small temptations²¹ are said to behave like flies. The habits and characteristics of

16. Tr., II, 88.

17. Tr., II, 404.

18. K. D., 4.

19. V. D., 57, 152; Tr., II, 30.

20. Tr., II, 166.

21. V. D., 55, 146, 263, 264.

flies are three times contrasted with those of bees.²² Wolves and bears²³ are more dangerous than flies, but the latter are more troublesome, just as small temptations are more frequently to be reckoned with than big ones. It would not be humility for a fly to consider himself nothing in comparison to a mountain.²⁴ There are some thoughts²⁵ which flit about like flies without attaching themselves to any subject. The Sage says that "dying flies spoil the ointment."²⁶

GNAT

The gnat²⁷ is twice mentioned together with the fly. See (1) and (2) above.

GRASSHOPPER

St. Francis (of Assisi) called his religious²⁸ grasshoppers because of the praise they rendered to God during the night. There follows a description of the anatomy of the grasshopper, whose breast is said to be full of tubes as if they were natural organs. David the Psalmist²⁹ is one of the greatest spiritual grasshoppers who has ever sung.

22. V. D., 117, 190; Tr., II, 413.

23. V. D., 262.

24. V. D., 300.

25. Tr., II, 88.

26. V. D., 55.

27. V. D., 263; Tr., II, 413.

28. Tr., II, 68.

29. Tr., II, 69.

LOCUST

Those who discouraged the Israelites from going into the Promised Land told them that the inhabitants of that country devoured other men like locusts: "ainsi le monde, ma chère Philothée, diffame tant qu'il peut la sainte dévotion, dépeignant les personnes dévotes avec un visage fâcheux, triste et chagrin..."³⁰

SCORPION

The scorpion's sting is poisonous, but an oil can be extracted from this animal which is a great remedy against its own sting. Thus is sin³¹ shameful in itself but once converted into contrition and confession, it becomes both honorable and salutary.

SPIDER

Venial sin³² is to the soul what the spider is to the bees -- it does not kill them but it spoils their work. Country people say that peacocks³³ rid the house of spiders. As the spider makes his web almost always when the sky is cloudy, the devil³⁴ finds it easy to cast his snares into a soul burdened by melancholy.

30. V. D., 12.

31. V. D., 48.

32. V. D., 55, 248.

33. Tr., II, 350.

34. Tr., II, 445.

WASP

The wasp and hornet are five times contrasted with the bee. In four cases the wasp represents evil people,³⁵ the bee good people. Once the wasp represents evil works,³⁶ the bee good works.

WORM

As the worm is engendered in the most delicate and ripest apple, jealousy³⁷ is born of the most ardent love of married people. As a mother refuses sugar to a child subject to worms, God removes consolations from us when we become subject to the worms of presumption.³⁸ The devout soul³⁹ changes his old life for a new one as the bigatz and silkworms change their form and from worms become butterflies. Worms will destroy our bodies, but they revered the one⁴⁰ which produced the body of their Creator. The worm of vanity⁴¹ is in the middle of the pagan virtues. (See Apple).

It is interesting for us to note the following comment on St. Francis of Assisi and his love of creatures, one of which happens to be a worm:

35. V. D., 174, 190, 198, 298.

36. Tr., II, 413.

37. V. D., 229.

38. V. D., 281.

39. Tr., II, 166.

40. J. A., II, 315.

41. Tr., II, 404.

Saint François ne fut pas seulement extrême en la pratique de la pauvreté, comme chacun sçait, mais il le fut encor en celle de la simplicité. Il racheta un aigneau de peur qu'on ne le tuast, par ce qu'il representoit nostre Seigneur. Il portoit respect presque à toutes creatures, en contemplation de leur Créateur, par une non accoustumée, mais très-prudente simplicité. Telles fois il s'est amusé à retirer les vermisseaux du chemin, affin que quelqu'un ne les foulast au passage, se resouvenant que son Sauveur s'estoit parangonné au vermisseau. Il appelloit les creatures ses frères et seurs par certaine considération admirable que le saint amour luy suggéroit.⁴²

42. Tr., II, 229.

CHAPTER V

PLANT LIFE (I)

Of sixteen references to plants in general, Christians¹ (devout souls) are four times called plants; four times the virtues² are plants; and three times the action of God (and His grace) upon the soul is compared to the effect of sun and spring³ upon the plants. Plants are mentioned on four occasions in connection with the creation⁴ of the world. Our good desires⁵ are once called plants.

FLOWERS

The fifty-six general references to flowers are equally divided between those in which the flower is mentioned in its actual⁶ sense and those in which the flower is used in an en-

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1. V. D., 15, 282; Tr., I, 457; Tr., II, 370.
 2. V. D., 14; Tr., II, 105, 219, 374.
 3. Tr., II, 161, 225, 410.
 4. Tr., I, 381, 387; Tr., II, 101; J. P., II, 16.
 5. V. D., 59.
 6. V. D., 2, 13, 15, 19, 93, 104, 111, 123, 167, 250, 284, 304; Tr., I, 343; Tr., II, 63, 66, 71, 76, 78, 88, 92, 225, 251, 346, 380, 383, 425; J. A., II, 312; J. P., II, 14.

tirely figurative⁷ sense. Often the two uses are closely united, as in the following example:

'Les fleurs', dit l'Époux sacré, 'apparaissent en notre terre; le temps d'émonder et tailler est venu.' Qui font les fleurs de nos coeurs, O Philothée, sinon les bons désirs? Or, tout aussitôt qu'ils paraissent, il faut mettre la main à la serpe pour retrancher de notre conscience toutes les oeuvres mortes et superflues.⁸

There are five occasions on which the devout soul is urged to gather a "bouquet of devotion"⁹ to smell throughout the day. Flowers are ten times mentioned in connection with the bees¹⁰ and the gathering of honey (one citation of Aristotle). Four references to flowers are from the Canticle of Canticles.¹¹

CARNATION

It is useless to ask why the carnation is not a marigold: the beauty of the universe¹² requires variety. Meditation¹³ is like one's smelling the carnation, the rose, etc., one after the other; while contemplation is like smelling the scented water composed of all these flowers. The lady who turns from her embroidery leaves the needle stuck in the carnation¹⁴ or

7. V. D., 19, 28, 30, 33, 40, 70, 104, 137, 154, 221, 256; Tr., I, 401; Tr., II, 71, 101, 193, 214, 239, 299, 370, 373, 373, 388, 393; J. P., II, 14; O. F., III, 145, 151, 162.

8. V. D., 19.

9. V. D., 28, 30, 33, 40, 70.

10. V. D., 15, 104, 167, 250, 284, 304; Tr., II, 66, 88, 92.

11. V. D., 19, 93; Tr., II, 71; J. A., II, 312.

12. Tr., I, 401.

13. Tr., II, 100.

14. Tr., II, 426.

any flower on which she is working. Similarly, God, while He is making the embroidery of the virtues and His holy love in our souls, leaves there the needle of servile fear until, charity being perfect, this pricking needle is removed.

DAISY

Just as the grace of a daisy cannot be equalled to that of the lily, fasting¹⁵ cannot be compared to martyrdom even though both be endured with an equal charity.

GLADIOL

They say that the sun causes the gladiol to close. The devout soul does the same when, feeling the presence of God, it enters into the prayer of recollection.¹⁶

HELIOTROPE

The devout soul turns to God as the heliotrope towards the sun.¹⁷

HYACINTH

The Sacred Spouse¹⁸ describing her lover says that his hands are wreathed with hyacinth.

15. Tr., II, 380.

16. Tr., II, 110.

17. V. D., 85; Tr., II, 239, 373.

18. Tr., II, 100.

JASMINE

Meditation¹⁹ is like one's smelling the jasmine, the orange blossom, etc., one after the other; while contemplation is like smelling the scented water composed of all these flowers. It is one kind of union²⁰ when we join the jasmine to a garden trellis and another when the ivy clings to a tree and even penetrates its bark.

LILY

The lily is mentioned twenty times in reference to a great variety of thoughts. On four occasions it is a general symbol of purity;²¹ three times the Blessed Virgin²² is called a lily; the holy pair, Mary and Joseph,²³ are a lily of incomparable beauty; the Savior²⁴ is like a lily. The Sacred Spouse describing her lover²⁵ says that his lips are like the lily. The devout soul²⁶ is a lily surrounded by thorns. The devout soul pastures among the lilies.²⁷ Lilies are larger than violets: the beauty of the universe²⁸ requires variety. The grace of the daisy cannot be compared to that of the lily, as fast-

19. Tr., II, 100.

20. Tr., II, 143.

21. V. D., 47, 150, 306; Tr., II, 214.

22. J. A., II, 323, 329; J. P., II, 15.

23. Tr., I, 298.

24. Tr., II, 65.

25. Tr., II, 100.

26. Tr., II, 58.

27. Tr., II, 112, 199, 289.

28. Tr., I, 401.

ing cannot be compared to martyrdom.²⁹ Charity³⁰ resembles a lily. The lamps of the ancient temple were placed on golden fleurs de lys.³¹ The Blessed Virgin is asked to bless the lilies of France³² that they may be pure in the unity of the Faith. The following interesting passage compares the miseries of redeemed human nature to the lily:

Comme l'arc-en-ciel touchant l'espine aspalathus la rend plus odorante que les lys, aussi la rédemption de nostre Seigneur touchant nos misères, elle les rend plus utiles et aymables que n'eust jamais esté l'innocence originelle.³³

MARIGOLD

It is useless to ask why the carnation is not a marigold: the beauty of the universe³⁴ requires variety. The yellow of the marigolds represents the cares of marriage.³⁵

ORANGE BLOSSOM

Meditation³⁶ is like one's smelling the jasmine, the orange blossom, etc., one after the other; while contemplation is like smelling the scented water composed of all these flowers.

29. Tr., II, 380.

30. Tr., II, 423.

31. Tr., I, 298.

32. J. A., II, 329.

33. Tr., I, 395.

34. Tr., I, 401.

35. Tr., II, 214.

36. Tr., II, 100.

PALM FLOWERS

The Sacred Spouse³⁷ describing her lover says that his hair is like a sprig of palm flowers not yet entirely opened.

PANSY

Pansies beautiful to the sight but without odor are compared to thoughts³⁸ beautiful to say but without effect or production. The lady who turns from her embroidery leaves the needle stuck in the pansy³⁹ or any flower on which she is working. (See Carnation.)

ROSE

As there is no pleasure⁴⁰ without pain, there is no rose without thorns. The devout soul can say: "My pains⁴¹ are roses in comparison with those who are without help." Our actions⁴² performed without tenderness of heart are agreeable to God just as roses when dried have more odor and strength, though less beauty, than when fresh. The Martyrs⁴³ are more red than the rose in charity. The Blessed Virgin⁴⁴ is a rose in charity. As the sun will never equal the beauty of the

37. Tr., II, 100.

38. V. D., 85.

39. Tr., II, 426.

40. V. D., 84; Tr., II, 247.

41. V. D., 120.

42. V. D., 285.

43. V. D., 306; Tr., II, 214.

44. J. A., II, 323.

violet to that of the rose, fasting cannot be compared to martyrdom⁴⁵ even though both be endured with an equal charity. Meditation⁴⁶ is like one's smelling the carnation, rose, etc., one after the other. (See CARNATION.) As the sun does not regard a rose less with a million other flowers, God does not love one soul⁴⁷ less while loving an infinity of others. The lady who turns from her embroidery leaves the needle stuck in the rose⁴⁸ or any flower on which she is working. (See CARNATION.) It is useless to ask why the rosemary is not a rose: the beauty of the universe⁴⁹ requires variety. The herb dodecatheos is not a rose.⁵⁰ (See herb DODECATHEOS.) The odor of roses is refined when the bush is planted near garlic.⁵¹ If you graft musk on a rosebush, the flowers will smell musk-like:

Si vous entés un rosier, et que dedans la fente du tige vous mettiés un grain de musc, les roses qui en proviendront seront toutes musquées. Fendés donc vostre coeur par la sainte pénitence, et mettiés l'amour de Dieu dans la fente; puis entés sur iceluy telle vertu que vous voudrés, et les oeuvres qui en proviendront seront parfumées de sainteté, sans qu'il soit besoin d'autre soin pour cela.⁵²

ROSEMARY

The rosemary is one of the ingredients from which a scent-

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45. Tr., II, 380.
 46. Tr., II, 100.
 47. Tr., II, 346.
 48. Tr., II, 426.
 49. Tr., I, 401.
 50. Tr., I, 379.
 51. Tr., II, 58.
 52. Tr., II, 371.

ed water is distilled. The distilled product is of a much more agreeable odor than a mixture of the ingredients themselves, just as spiritual love is more excellent when entirely separated from corporal affections.⁵³ It is useless to ask why the rosemary is not a rose: the beauty of the universe⁵⁴ demands variety. Meditation⁵⁵ is like one's smelling the rose, rosemary, etc., one after the other. (See CARNATION.)

VIOLET

The widow⁵⁶ is in the Church a March violet by the sweetness of the odor of her devotion. It is useless to ask why the lilies are larger than the violets: the beauty of the universe⁵⁷ requires variety. Charity is the sacred water by which the garden of the Church is made fertile. To each flower it gives a different color, to some the violet of mortification.⁵⁸ As the sun will never equal the beauty of the violet to that of the rose, fasting⁵⁹ cannot be compared to martyrdom even though both be endured with an equal charity.

MISCELLANEOUS

FLOWERS OF THE TREE OF TYLOS

Humility⁶⁰ covers and hides our virtues as the flowers of

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- 53. Tr., I, 353.
 - 54. Tr., I, 401.
 - 55. Tr., II, 100.
 - 56. V. D., 243.
 - 57. Tr., I, 401.
 - 58. Tr., II, 214.
 - 59. Tr., II, 380.
 - 60. V. D., 128.

the tree of the isles of Tylos close at night and open only at sunrise. Our human virtues should appear only for the sake of charity, which is the sun of the virtues.

FRUITS

Of forty general references to fruits, twenty-one actually mention the fruits⁶¹ while nineteen make use of the word in an abstract or figurative sense.⁶² As in the case of flowers, the two uses are sometimes closely united.⁶³ The preserving of fruits interests St. Francis, whose words on the subject suggest that he had often watched this process. It makes him think of the virtues⁶⁴ which, like fruits, must be preserved in the sugar of devotion or divine love. As an illustration of the figurative use of fruits, we quote the following passage in which the author compares the fruits of reason and of grace:

La rayson naturelle est un bon arbre que Dieu a planté en nous; les fruitz qui en proviennent ne peuvent estre que bons: fruitz qui, en comparayson de ceux qui procèdent de la grace, sont à la vérité de très-petit prix, mays non pas pourtant de nul prix, puisque Dieu les a prisés, et pour iceux a donné des récompenses temporelles.⁶⁵

61. V. D., 13, 134, 134, 135, 151, 154, 233, 278; Tr., II, 219, 231, 317, 370, 378, 379, 380, 383, 383, 407; J. P., II, 14; O. F., III, 148, 183.

62. V. D., 184, 239, 277; Tr., I, 420; Tr., II, 219, 264, 278, 289, 299, 367, 370, 383, 385, 408; J. P., II, 6, 15; S. P., II, 226; O. F., III, 152, 162.

63. Tr., II, 219, 370, 383.

64. V. D., 134, 151, 233; Tr., II, 38.

65. Tr., II, 367.

ALMOND

Those who treat of rustic matters declare that if one writes some word on an almond, puts its back in its shell and plants it thus, all the fruit of the tree which comes from it will be engraved with this word. The devout soul should inscribe on his heart the words Vive Jésus, and all his actions,⁶⁶ which are its fruit, will be engraved with these words. Three general references⁶⁷ to nuts are incidental.

APPLE

Four citations from the Canticle of Canticles⁶⁸ mention apples. Give the Savior the apple which is our heart.⁶⁹ St. Paul preaching humility⁷⁰ to the Corinthians says that if the world is an apple, we are its scrapings. Adam and Eve⁷¹ left grace for an apple. A tree grafted⁷² from the appletree will bear apples. The virtues of the pagans⁷³ are like wormy apples: the worm of vanity is in their middle. Charity⁷⁴ is a true apple of paradise. The virtues⁷⁵ of the bishop of Sardes, who was in sin, were empty hulls, not apples good to eat. Servile

66. V. D., 184.

67. Tr., I, 416; Tr., II, 378, 380.

68. V. D., 93; Tr., II, 44, 71; J. A., II, 312.

69. V. D., 276.

70. Tr., II, 137.

71. Tr., II, 331.

72. Tr., II, 378, 379.

73. Tr., II, 404.

74. Tr., II, 436.

75. Tr., II, 408.

fear is to love⁷⁶ like the peel to an apple -- of small prize in comparison to the apple itself but greatly useful for its preservation during the hazards of this mortal life.

APRICOT

Apricots, tender and easily spoiled, must be preserved in sugar just as frail human souls and the virtues⁷⁷ are preserved by devotion and by the flesh and blood of the Son of God.

CHERRY

Cherries, tender and easily spoiled, must be preserved in sugar just as frail human souls⁷⁸ are preserved by devotion and by the flesh and blood of the Son of God. Our desires⁷⁹ are ordinarily like those of pregnant women who wish fresh cherries in autumn. If you are filled with worldly pleasures, it is not strange that spiritual joys⁸⁰ are distasteful to you: the ancient proverb says that doves already full find cherries bitter. A tree grafted⁸¹ from the cherrytree will bear cherries.

CLOVE

The clove⁸² is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.)

76. Tr., II, 428.

77. V. D., 100, 233; Tr., II, 380.

78. V. D., 100, 233.

79. V. D., 225.

80. V. D., 282.

81. Tr., II, 378, 379.

82. Tr., I, 353.

DATE

We⁸³ are like those date palms which in this climate make certain imperfect productions, but as for bearing mature and well formed dates, that is reserved for warmer countries.

FIG

It is useless to ask why the fig is sweet and the lemon sour: the beauty of the universe⁸⁴ requires variety. They say that horses loaded with figs lose all their strength. The law⁸⁵ of the Lord is sweeter than figs, but man, like the animal which has no understanding, loses heart and cannot find strength to bear this lovable burden. A tree grafted⁸⁶ from the figtree will bear figs.

GRAPE

The ancient Nazarenes abstained from grapes because they might excite the desire for wine. We should not put our affection on things⁸⁷ which, not sinful in themselves, are nevertheless dangerous. Evil-saying will serve our reputations⁸⁸ as the pruning knife serves the vine, making it increase the production of grapes. Grapes from vines planted near olive-

83. Tr., I, 373.

84. Tr., I, 401.

85. Tr., II, 209.

86. Tr., II, 378.

87. V. D., 56.

88. V. D., 136.

trees have the taste of olives. Virtues⁸⁹ are communicated by association with the virtuous, and certain virtues participate in holiness by being near God, that is, in a heart that loves God. Our desires⁹⁰ are ordinarily like those of pregnant women who desire fresh grapes in spring. If the reader finds some things in this work⁹¹ which seem useless, he may remember that Nature planning the production of grapes produces so many leaves that there are few vines which do not need pruning. One plants the vine principally for its fruit; the universe is the vine; the Savior⁹² the grape. One can mistake human love for charity⁹³ as the birds thought the grapes in the painting of Zeuxis were true grapes. A tree grafted⁹⁴ from the vine will bear grapes. Charity⁹⁵ is the fruit of the Holy Ghost as the grape is the fruit of the vine. The vine steeped in theriaca will produce grapes which have its properties against poison. Penance⁹⁶ effaces sin by the properties of divine love. Manna⁹⁷ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including the grape.

89. V. D., 191; Tr., II, 373.

90. V. D., 225.

91. Tr., I, 306.

92. Tr., I, 393.

93. Tr., II, 33.

94. Tr., II, 378.

95. Tr., II, 435.

96. Tr., I, 445.

97. Tr., I, 379.

LEMON

The lemon⁹⁸ is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.) Manna⁹⁹ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including the lemon. It is useless to ask why the fig is sweet and the lemon sour: the beauty of the universe¹⁰⁰ requires variety. The pleasure of pleasing God¹⁰¹ is not divine love but only a fruit of it which can be separated from it like a lemon from the lemontree.

MANDRAKE

Honors¹⁰² resemble the mandrake which, when smelled from a distance, is of a consoling sweetness. Pliny recounts that the odor from the juice of this fruit, given by surgeons to their patients as an anaesthetic, often produces unconsciousness.¹⁰³ It is for phantoms of contentment¹⁰⁴ like the sleep produced by the mandrake that we leave the love of God. Our author relates the story of how Rachael exchanged the caresses of Jacob for a few mandrakes.¹⁰⁵

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98. Tr., I, 353.
 99. Tr., I, 379.
 100. Tr., I, 401.
 101. Tr., II, 278.
 102. V. D., 123.
 103. Tr., II, 329.
 104. Tr., II, 331.
 105. Tr., II, 329, 331.

MELON

There are those who abstain from sin¹⁰⁶ through fear just as those who are sick abstain from melons. Manna¹⁰⁷ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including melons. It is useless to ask why melons are larger than strawberries: the beauty of the universe¹⁰⁸ requires variety. Just as seeds which would produce only melons of insipid taste, being dipped in sweetened water, produce sweet melons, our hearts¹⁰⁹ would not be able to project a single good thought for the service of God without being immersed in charity by the Holy Ghost.

NUTMEG

Nutmeg¹¹⁰ is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.)

OLIVE

A young girl crowned with a crown of olives¹¹¹ appeared before Saint John, Bishop of Alexandria. In order to give the taste of olives¹¹² to grapes it is necessary to plant the vine near the olivetrees. (See GRAPE.)

106. V. D., 24; Tr., I, 340.

107. Tr., I, 379.

108. Tr., I, 401.

109. Tr., II, 383.

110. Tr., I, 353.

111. V. D., 109.

112. V. D., 191; Tr., II, 373.

PEACH

Charity¹¹³ does not make the virtues equal any more than sugar makes nuts or peaches equal to apricots and plums in sweetness.

PEAR

Manna¹¹⁴ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including the pear.

PLUM

Manna¹¹⁵ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including the plum. Charity¹¹⁶ does not make the virtues equal any more than sugar makes nuts or peaches equal to apricots and plums (mirabolans) in sweetness.

POMEGRANATE

The pomegranate represents holy charity.¹¹⁷ A tree grafted¹¹⁸ from the pomegranate tree will bear pomegranates. The Holy Ghost confers the gift of loving fear and adds also the gift of servile fear¹¹⁹ which serves the other more excellent

113. Tr., II, 380.

114. Tr., I, 379.

115. Tr., I, 379.

116. Tr., II, 380.

117. Tr., II, 128, 438.

118. Tr., II, 378.

119. Tr., II, 428.

as the peel of the pomegranate serves the grains and the juice within.

QUINCE

The following passage on the quince is one to which Sayous¹²⁰ objects on the ground that the author insists too much upon a comparison agreeably begun and spoils it with a conclusion of bad taste:

Il y a des fruits, comme le coing, qui pour l'âpreté de leur suc ne sont guère agréables qu'en confiture; il y en a d'autres, qui pour leur tendreté et délicatesse ne peuvent durer, s'ils ne sont aussi confits, comme les cerises et abricots. Ainsi les femmes doivent souhaiter que leurs maris soient confits au sucre de la dévotion, car l'homme sans dévotion est un animal sévère, âpre et rude; et les maris doivent souhaiter que leurs femmes soient dévotes, car sans la dévotion la femme est grandement fragile, et sujette à déchoir ou ternir en la vertu.¹²¹

STRAWBERRY

As strawberries are preserved in sugar, our frail hearts¹²² are preserved from corruption by the flesh and blood of the Son of God. Just as children picking strawberries cling to their father with one hand, we, gathering the goods of this world¹²³ in one hand, must hold firmly to the heavenly Father with the other. It is useless to ask why

120. Pierre André Sayous, Histoire de la littérature française à l'étranger, I, 76.

121. V. D., 233.

122. V. D., 100.

123. V. D., 146.

melons are larger than strawberries: the beauty of the universe¹²⁴ requires variety. As strawberries growing on the earth receive no poison from serpents, the natural virtues¹²⁵ are unimpaired by sin.

124. Tr., I, 401.

125. Tr., II, 369.

CHAPTER VI

PLANT LIFE (II)

GRASS AND HERBS

Of six references to grass¹ one from the sermon Pour le jour de la Pentecoste should be mentioned. Here the author speaks of the Apostles as a desert in which there was no green grass of holy resolutions² before the descent of the Holy Ghost.

There are five general references to herbs.³ One passage describes how a swarm of bees in flight can be called back by the odor of some fragrant herbs.⁴ The author uses this example from Nature to explain how the Lord, by putting some feelings of heavenly consolations in our hearts, draws to Himself all the faculties of our souls.

AGNUS CASTUS

The herb Agnus Castus three times represents the Lamb of God.⁵ This herb is said to have two marvelous properties: Those who lie on it become chaste,⁶ and the travelers who carry

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1. V. D., 82, 145; Tr., II, 219, 251; J. P., II, 14, 26.
 2. J. P., II, 26.
 3. Tr., II, 101, 108, 381, 389; S. P., II, 201.
 4. Tr., II, 108.
 5. V. D., 156; Tr., II, 210, 287.
 6. V. D., 156.

it do not become weary.⁷

ANGELICA

They say the herb Angelica sweetens the breath as chastity⁸ in the heart makes speech clean and modest. Divine love⁹ is a plant like the one called angelica whose root is not less fragrant and healthful than its stem and leaves.

APROXIS

The herb aproxis begins to burn as soon as it sees fire, in which it resembles the human heart¹⁰ that burns with love from the sight of love in another heart.

BETONY

The herb dodecatheos is not betony.¹¹ (See DODECATHEOS.)

BUGLOSS

The herb dodecatheos is not bugloss.¹² (See DODECATHEOS.)

CAMOMILE

Camomile¹³ is one of the ingredients from which a scented

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7. Tr., II, 210, 287.
 8. V. D., 197.
 9. Tr., I, 306.
 10. V. D., 170; Tr., II, 49.
 11. Tr., I, 379.
 12. Tr., I, 379.
 13. Tr., I, 353.

water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.)

CELANDINE

It is interesting to note the "on dit" with which the author introduces his discussion of celandine as a remedy for jaundice:

Toutes choses paraissent jaunes aux yeux des icteriques et qui ont la grande jaunisse; l'on dit que pour les guérir de ce mal, il leur faut faire porter de l'éclairé sous la plante de leur pied. Certes ce péché de jugement téméraire est une jaunisse spirituelle, qui fait paraître toutes choses mauvaises aux yeux de ceux qui en sont atteints; mais qui en veut guérir, il faut qu'il mette les remèdes non aux yeux, non à l'entendement, mais aux affections qui sont les pieds de l'âme...¹⁴

CHICORY

Almost all herbs with yellow flowers and even wild chicory, the flowers of which are blue, turn towards the sun as the devout soul¹⁵ turns to God.

DITTANY

Aristotle and Pliny relate that certain animals wounded by an arrow have recourse to the herb dittany by means of which the arrow leaves their body. (See DEER.) Christians wounded by the Passion of the Savior quickly run to worldly consolations¹⁶ by means of which the darts of divine love

14. V. D., 202.

15. Tr., II, 239.

16. J. A., II, 309.

are driven from their memory.

DODECATHEOS

In order to show that the divine perfections are in reality only one but infinite perfection, the author cites Pliny on the herb dodecatheos¹⁷ which curing all maladies is not rhubarb, nor senna, nor betony, nor bugloss, but which in the unique simplicity of its property has as much strength as all the other medicines together.

HYSSOP

Hyssop¹⁸ is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.) In two cases the rite¹⁹ of sprinkling with hyssop is mentioned.

MARJORAM

Marjoram²⁰ is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.)

OPHIUSA

St. Francis uses another herb, ophiusa of Ethiopia, in discussing the sin of rash judgment. This passage is a close

17. Tr., I, 379.

18. Tr., I, 353.

19. Tr., I, 395; J. F. II, 216.

20. Tr., I, 353.

parallel to that of the celandine on the same subject:

Ceux qui boivent le suc de l'herbe ophiura d'Ethiopie euident partout voir des serpents et choses effroyables: ceux qui ont avalé l'orgueil, l'envie, l'ambition, la haine, ne voient rien qu'ils ne trouvent mauvais et blâmable; ceux-là pour être guéris doivent prendre du vin de palme, et j'en dis de même pour ceux-ci: buvez le plus que vous pourrez le vin sacré de la charité, elle vous affranchira de ces mauvaises humeurs qui vous font faire ces jugements tortus.²¹

PALMA CHRISTI

Some persons refuse to undertake the devout life, being of the opinion that as no animal dares taste the seed of the herb palma Christi, no man living in the world should pretend to the palm of Christian piety.²²

SAFFRON

Honors and dignities²³ are like saffron which grows better and more abundantly from being trampled under foot.

SCITICUM

They say that those who have the herb sciticum in their mouths are never hungry nor thirsty. Such are the devout souls²⁴ in this world and the blessed in Heaven who enjoy the consolations of God and His presence.

21. V. D., 201.

22. V. D., 4.

23. V. D., 122.

24. V. D., 276; Tr., II, 51.

SENNA

The herb dodecatheos is not senna.²⁵ (See DODECATHEOS.)

SISELLE

They say that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty and would never succeed if she did not use an herb called siselle²⁶ or were not frightened by thunder. (See DEER.)

SWEET BASIL

Sweet basil²⁷ is one of the ingredients from which a scented water is distilled. (See ROSEMARY.)

THERIACUM

Penance precedes love but the force of love²⁸ is contained in it just as theriacum-wine does not contain the proper substance of theriacum, but the plant of the vine having been steeped in theriacum, the grapes and the wine have the virtue and operation of theriacum against all kinds of poison.

THYME

Just as the bees make the sweetest honey from thyme, a bitter herb, the greatest virtues and happiness are prepared

25. Tr., I, 379.

26. J. L., II, 26.

27. Tr., I, 353.

28. Tr., I, 445.

in time of tribulation.²⁹ Meditation³⁰ is like one's smelling thyme, the jasmine, etc., one after the other; while contemplation is like smelling the scented water composed of all these flowers.

WOLFS-BANE

There is a honey of Heraclée extremely sweet to the taste and so poisonous that all who eat it become mad. Worldly friendships³¹ are like that for they are marked by an excess of honeyed words and praises of sensual beauty while holy friendship has a simple and frank language.

TREES

Of forty-nine general references to trees fourteen³² are incidental and have to do chiefly with the trees per se. In thirty-five references trees are used in a figurative sense³³ representing the just man, humility, the will, the human heart, good resolutions, divine love, the Redemption, the Savior, the Blessed Virgin, the First Commandment, great saints, human

29. V. D., 13, 120.

30. Tr., II, 100.

31. V. D., 167, 176, 182.

32. V. D., 29, 78, 82, 85, 278; Tr., II, 15, 143, 193, 219, 315, 370, 373, 407; O. F., III, 147.

33. V. D., 59, 107, 128, 239, 277, 308, 310; Tr., I, 336, 348, 420, 457, 472, 473; Tr., II, 6, 59, 78, 147, 231, 264, 289, 299, 317, 367, 370, 378, 379, 385, 396, 408, 436; O. F., III, 152, 183; J. P., II, 15, 27; S. P., II, 226.

reason, the virtues, sinners, the Duc de Mercœur, ignorance, and the Cross. In the following passage a tree represents the five principal parts of divine love:

Certes, à parler généralement, l'amour comprend tout cela ensemblement, comme un bel arbre, duquel la racine est la convenance de la volonté au bien; le pied en est la complaisance; son tige, c'est le mouvement; les recherches, poursuites et autres efforts, en sont les branches; mais l'union et jouissance en est le fruit. Ainsy l'amour semble estre composé de ces cinq principales parties, ...³⁴

ALMOND

Bitter almond trees are made sweet when they are tapped at the foot and the sap is allowed to run out. Why cannot we do the same with our bad inclinations?³⁵ Goats who touch sweet almond trees with their tongue cause them to become bitter. In like manner impure persons by their speech cause others to fall from purity.³⁶ The third reference³⁷ to the almond tree is discussed under the fruit almond.

APPLE

The soul³⁸ is a garden from whose appletrees it renders to God the fruit. Pliny described a tree in Tivoli grafted with all sorts of trees so that on one branch it bore apples

34. Tr., I, 336.

35. V. D., 58.

36. V. D., 156.

37. V. D., 184.

38. Tr., II, 44.

and one could say that it was an appletree. This tree is like divine love³⁹ from which all kinds of virtues proceed.

BALM

Divine love,⁴⁰ king of virtues, has nothing which is not lovable just as the balm, prince of aromatic trees, has neither bark nor leaf which is not fragrant.

CEDAR

In the description of the divine Spouse⁴¹ from the Canticle of Canticles his nose is said to be among the cedars of Lebanon. The just man⁴² will grow like the cedars of Lebanon. By the ministry of the Apostles, God will annihilate the cedars of Lebanon, that is, the high and mighty infidels.⁴³

CHERRY

See APPLE. What is said of the appletree of Tivoli is said also of the cherrytree.⁴⁴

ELM

The vine is joined to an elm⁴⁵ in a manner different from

39. Tr., II, 378, 379.

40. Tr., I, 460.

41. V. D., 155.

42. Tr., II, 370.

43. J. P., II, 24.

44. Tr., II, 378, 379.

45. Tr., II, 143.

that of ivy which clings to a tree and even penetrates its bark. The Savior joined Himself to our human nature⁴⁶ like a vine to its elm, making it share in some way in its fruit.

FIG

Pliny says that dead honey bees will live again in the spring when placed in the sun and covered with the ashes of the figtree. They are like the good works which, when sin has been washed away, will come to life again covered with the ashes of penance.⁴⁷

JUNIPER

It is said that Elie fleeing the persecution of Jesebel found himself one day under a junipertree.⁴⁸

LAUREL

There is no countryside in which the family of the Duc de Mercoeur has not planted the laurels⁴⁹ of its valor and its piety.

LEMON

Pleasure in pleasing God⁵⁰ is not, properly speaking,

46. Tr., II, 152.

47. Tr., II, 413.

48. S. P., II, 226.

49. O. F., III, 153.

50. Tr., II, 278.

divine love but a fruit of it which can be separated from it as a lemon from its lemontree.

OAK

One cannot graft the oak upon the peartree, nor can one graft anger or despair⁵¹ upon charity.

OLIVE

There is a natural affinity between the vine and the olive-tree so that grapes from vines planted near olivetrees have the taste of olives. Virtues⁵² are communicated by association with the virtuous, and certain virtues participate in holiness by being near God, that is, in a heart that loves God. In the deluge of His justice the green olivetree is a symbol of the compassion⁵³ of God.

PALM

We⁵⁴ are like those date palms which in this climate make certain imperfect productions, but as for bearing mature and well formed dates, that is reserved for warmer countries. There is no countryside in which the family of the Duc de Mercœur has not planted the palms⁵⁵ of its valor and its piety.

51. Tr., II, 443.

52. V. D., 191; Tr., I, 354; Tr., II, 373.

53. Tr., II, 245.

54. Tr., I, 373.

55. O. F., III, 153.

PEAR

One cannot graft the oak upon the peartree, nor can one graft anger or despair upon charity.⁵⁶

POMEGRANATE

See APPLE. What is said of the appletree of Tivoli is said also of the pomegranatetree.⁵⁷ Divine love⁵⁸ is represented by the pomegranate which draws its properties from the pomegranatetree, of which it can be said to be both the crowning glory and the gift.

WALNUT

See APPLE. What is said of the appletree of Tivoli is said also of the walnuttree.⁵⁹ As the walnuttree, by drawing to itself the richness of the soil and by spreading too great a shade, is very harmful to the vines near which it is planted, so do little love affairs and flirtations⁶⁰ work the same harm to the soul.

TREES - MISCELLANEOUS

BUDS

The movements of love⁶¹ which precede the act of faith

56. Tr., II, 443.

57. Tr., II, 378.

58. Tr., II, 438.

59. Tr., II, 378.

60. V. D., 171.

61. Tr., I, 420.

are like buds on the mystical tree of the soul.

LEAVES OF TREES

The leaves of trees in themselves are not very valuable, but they serve, nevertheless, to embellish the trees and to protect the fruits while they are still tender. So it is with our good reputation⁶² which, in itself not very desirable, yet serves as an ornament of our life and is useful for the preservation of our virtues, especially those which are still tender and weak.

MISTLETOE AND MOSS ON TREES

There are certain passions⁶³ connected with love which are not love but rather an excrement of it like the mistletoe which comes as a growth or parasite on trees. Just as good trees never produce any poisonous fruit but do indeed produce mistletoe and moss, so great saints never commit mortal sin but do commit useless actions.⁶⁴

TREE OF TYLOS

See MISCELLANEOUS FLOWERS.⁶⁵

62. V. D., 134.

63. Tr., I, 348.

64. Tr., II, 317.

65. V. D., 128.

VEGETABLES

CABBAGE

There is a natural antipathy between the grapevine and cabbage.⁶⁶

GARLIC

Those who have given up sin but keep the affection⁶⁷ for it are out of Egypt but desire the garlic they used to eat there. The sweet odor of roses is enhanced by garlic⁶⁸ planted near the rosebushes.

MUSHROOM

Dances⁶⁹ and other such amusements are compared to mushrooms, the best of which are scarcely good. Take part in them seldom and then with precautions, for though not sinful in themselves, they are often the occasion of sin. According to Pliny,⁷⁰ mushrooms, being of a porous and spongy nature, easily draw to themselves the poison of serpents which are around them. There are souls whom heavenly inspirations do not penetrate but only serve for the production of certain spiritual mushrooms.⁷¹

66. Tr., I, 354.

67. V. D., 24.

68. Tr., II, 58.

69. V. D., 215, 216, 216, 216.

70. V. D., 216.

71. V. D., 275.

ONION

Those who have given up sin but keep the affection⁷² for it are out of Egypt but desire the onions they used to eat there.

PUMPKIN

Dances⁷³ are compared to pumpkins, the best of which are scarcely good. The sick man who refrains from eating pumpkins by the order of his doctor desires, nevertheless, to eat them, in which he is like the man who has left sin⁷⁴ but not the affection for it.

RHUBARB

Manna⁷⁵ was only one food, yet it contained the properties of all foods including rhubarb.

VINES

GRAPEVINE

Of nineteen references⁷⁶ to grapevines and vineyards, sixteen have already been noted in connection with the other aspects of nature with which they are mentioned: i. e., grapes (fruit of the vine), walnuttree, olivetree, fox, cabbage, elm.

72. V. D., 23, 24.

73. V. D., 215.

74. Tr., I, 340.

75. Tr., I, 379.

76. V. D., 95, 136, 159, 171, 191, 221; Tr., I, 306, 354, 393, 445; Tr., II, 4, 38, 138, 143, 152, 373, 383, 435; S.P., II, 207.

The sin of Ahab was in wishing to have the vineyard of Naboth.⁷⁷ From the Canticle of Canticles the Sulamite⁷⁸ describes herself as a vinegrower who tends a vineyard, and yet a vineyard which is not her own. The final reference to the vine is the one quoted in Chapter I, ST. FRANCIS AND THE CRITICS, in which the author cites the Scriptures as his authority for the use of comparisons, recalling that "our Lord makes no difficulty in putting Himself in comparison with shepherds, sheep, with vines, with stones."⁷⁹

IVY

Ivy clinging to a tree is twice used to describe the close union⁸⁰ between God and the devout soul.

PLANT LIFE - MISCELLANEOUS

BUSHES, HEDGES, SHRUBS

Moses said the sacred fire burned the bush without consuming it. Avarice consumes the miser⁸¹ but does not burn him. The nightingale⁸² sings at dawn flying from branch to branch of his bush. The sweet odor of roses is enhanced by garlic planted near the rosebushes.⁸³ If you graft musk on a rosebush,⁸⁴

77. V. D., 159.

78. Tr., II, 138.

79. S. P., II, 207.

80. Tr., II, 143, 156.

81. V. D., 158.

82. Tr., I, 421.

83. Tr., II, 58.

84. Tr., II, 371.

the flowers will smell musklike. (See ROSE.) God is a fire of love burning in a thorny bush⁸⁵ of pain. The Blessed Virgin was the thorn of this burning bush,⁸⁶ who received all her sweetness from her divine Son. Little children hold their father's hand while picking strawberries along the hedges.⁸⁷ In the matter of sin⁸⁸ we may take a lesson from the good farmer who renders thorns useful, building hedges of them around the fields as a protection against animals. In a dry season the shrubs⁸⁹ in the garden seem dead.

REEDS

Our works⁹⁰ of themselves are only weak reeds, but these reeds become golden by charity.

SEEDS

There are six general references⁹¹ to seeds. Some persons refuse to undertake the devout life, being of the opinion that as no animal dares taste the seed⁹² of the herb palmi Christi, no man living in the world should pretend to the palm of Christian piety. Our works,⁹³ like a mustard seed, are in no way

85. Tr., II, 58.

86. J. A., II, 325.

87. V. D., 146.

88. Tr., II, 193.

89. J. P., II, 14.

90. Tr., II, 383.

91. V. D., 145; Tr., I, 399; Tr., II, 196, 219, 383, 393.

92. V. D., 4.

93. Tr., II, 385.

comparable in greatness to the tree of glory that they produce.

STRAW

Some fruits can be preserved in straw.⁹⁴ Saint Charles, archbishop of Milan, was like a dog in the house of his master, sleeping only on a little straw.⁹⁵

TARES

The Savior tells how the master forbade his servants to weed his fields lest with the tares⁹⁶ they might pull up also the wheat.

THORNS

Of sixteen references to thorns, four are connected with sin and temptation,⁹⁷ three with unhappiness,⁹⁸ and one with the parable⁹⁹ of the sower and the seed that fell among thorns. Four times the author refers to the Savior's crown of thorns.¹⁰⁰ The thorn called Aspalathus,¹⁰¹ according to Pliny, is not of itself fragrant, but touched by the rainbow it has an odor of incomparable sweetness. This thorn represents the Blessed Virgin¹⁰² touched by the grace of God.

94. V. D., 151.

95. Tr., II, 138.

96. Tr., II, 350.

97. V. D., 84, 252; Tr., II, 9, 193.

98. V. D., 118, 283; Tr., II, 247.

99. Tr., I, 399.

100. V. D., 178; Tr., II, 63; J. A., II, 309; O. F., III, 154.

101. Tr., I, 393; Tr., II, 374, 442; J. A., II, 325.

102. J. A., II, 325.

WHEAT

The Apostles in the general harvest of the universe gathered certain remarkable heads of grain¹⁰³ (presumably wheat) with a special affection. The Savior tells how the master forbade his servants to weed his fields lest with the tares they might pull up also the wheat.¹⁰⁴ In the sermon Pour le jour de Saint Pierre is found the expression "Our Lord has fed you with his heavenly wheat."¹⁰⁵

103. V. D., 6.

104. Tr., II, 350.

105. S. P., II, 197.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

We have examined 903 references to animate nature in the works of St. Francis de Sales. These references are found in 1110 pages, making an average of slightly less than one allusion to Nature per page. Their distribution is as follows:

Domestic animals	142
Wild animals	99
Birds.	136
Insects and worms.	83
Flowers.	132
Fruits	109
Herbs.	44
Trees.	84
Vegetables	13
Vines.	21
Plants (miscellaneous)	40

TOO MANY COMPARISONS -- This is the charge made by Sainte-Beuve, Sayous, and Delplanque. Probably more space is given

to Nature in the works of St. Francis than in those of any other writer on theological subjects. However, his works were intended not only for those versed in the science but also for all souls with an interest in the devout life. Hence the need to proceed from the known to the unknown, from the natural to the supernatural. (See the defense offered by Brémond and Strowski, Chapter I, pp. 8, 9 and 10.)

SUGARY STYLE -- Many critics have seen no more in St. Francis than a "sugary" style, perhaps because they were out of sympathy with his subject or were led to hasty judgments by the many passages on the bee. (See Chapter IV, p. 49.)

CREDULITY -- This charge has been fully answered by Delplanque. (See Chapter I, pp. 12 and 13.)

COMPARISONS OBSCURE THOUGHT -- Sayous believes that certain of the comparisons render the thought less intelligible. This, of course, is a subjective matter, but of 903 comparisons we have not been able to find one in which the thought it was meant to illustrate was obscured, even in the case of those comparisons based upon the ancient compilations of natural history.

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